ALL ABOUT HISTORY

NEW

Fall of the samurai
How Japan's warrior class was finally defeated

50 YEARS ON

JFK
LIFE & LEGACY
His rise to power, the myths and the legend he left behind



+
Ninjas
Hernán Cortés
Omaha Beach
Bloody Sunday
Gunpowder Plot
10 evil dictators



The wrath of Sparta
How the Greeks won the Battle of Thermopylae

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Russia's WWII Night Witches
The young female pilots who terrorised Hitler's armies



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EXPERIENCE THE HEAT OF BATTLE

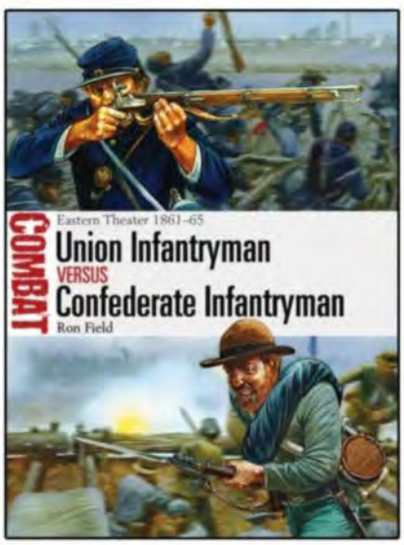
COMBAT

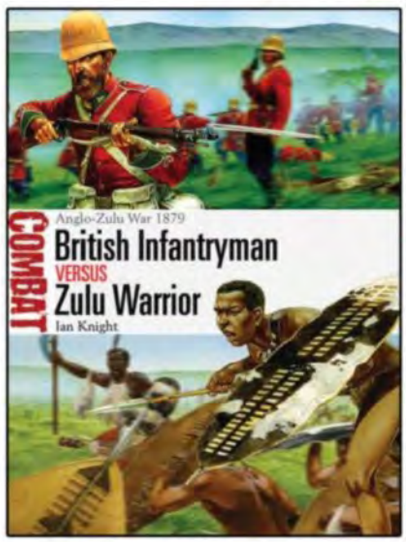
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THE OFFENSIVE BEGINS THIS SEPTEMBER

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Welcome to issue five

There are certain dates throughout history that have acquired real meaning and pathos, and one of these is undoubtedly Friday November 22, 1963. This was the date that America lost a president, and a president that in some ways transcended politics. JFK was a larger-than-life figure, someone that – rightly or wrongly – a whole nation seemed content to place their hopes and fears with.

The story of JFK is a remarkable one and, looking at him with the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to see just how many areas of modern day life he influenced. Our feature article sets out to separate the man from the myth and looks at how his use and manipulation of the media set the tone for the presidents that followed. It is a testament to the esteem that the public held JFK in that so many refuse to believe that one man, a lone gunman, could have ended his life. Therefore, elsewhere in this issue we explore just why this particular conspiracy theory has been one of the most enduring the world has ever known.

Other highlights include an article on the Spartan war with Persia that separates fact from fiction, and a feature on the most reprehensible dictators in history. Enjoy the issue and please keep on sending in your thoughts about the magazine.



Andrew Brown
Editor

JFK the family man: the president and his daughter Caroline on the presidential yacht in 1963. **Page 46**

This issue's highlights



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Find out how the Spanish explorer who discovered the New World and whose thirst for gold and plunder brought a civilisation to its knees.



42 What if?
If the Gunpowder Plot hadn't been thwarted, Great Britain might have never developed its Empire and France could have developed into the prominent world power...



76 Death of the samurai
With modernisation in Japan, the samurai's importance was waning and beginning to fade away – but there was still time for a final stand against overwhelming odds.

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JFK
LIFE & LEGACY















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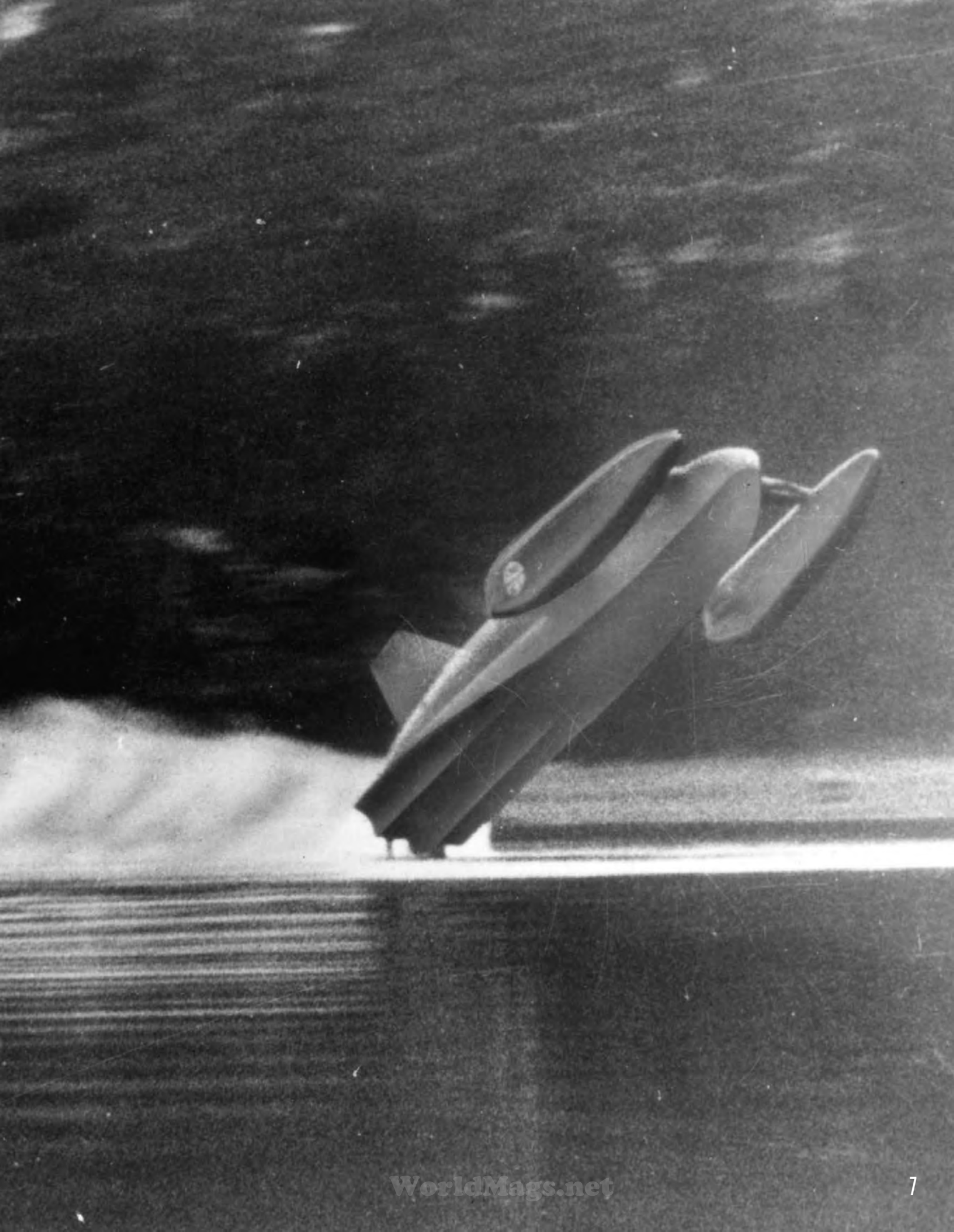
DEFINING MOMENT

WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT ENDS IN TRAGEDY

Donald Campbell loses control of his speedboat, Bluebird K7, and crashes as he attempts to break the world water speed record. Campbell, who was killed in the accident, had previously broken both world speed records on land and water and had been attempting to exceed 300mph on water when tragedy struck.

4 January 1967

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DEFINING MOMENT

A VERY SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

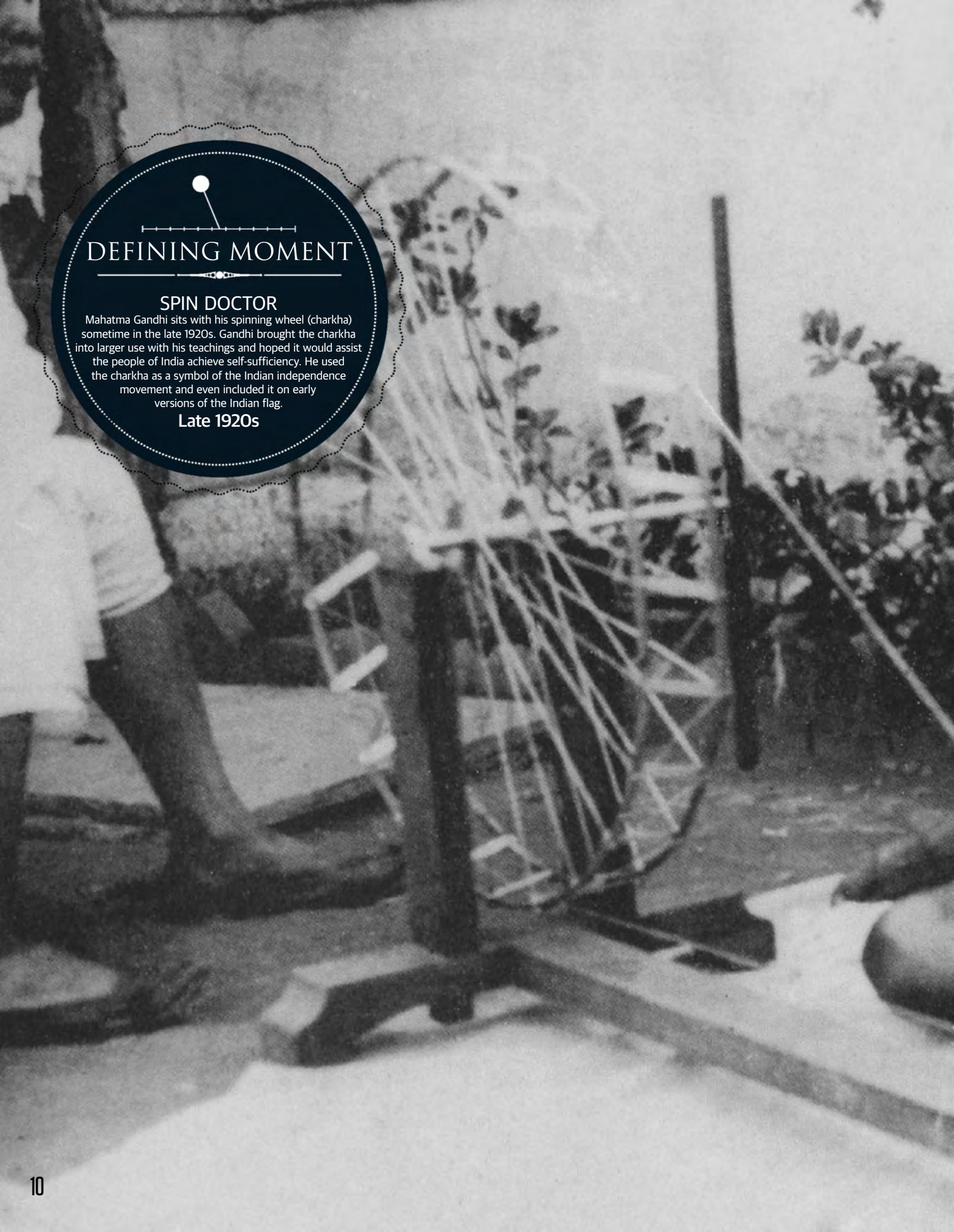
Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher meet for the first time at the White House in 1981, a month after Reagan had been elected as president. It proved to be the start of an extremely close relationship between the two leaders. "We had almost identical beliefs. From very different backgrounds," Thatcher later said about the 40th American president.

26 February 1981

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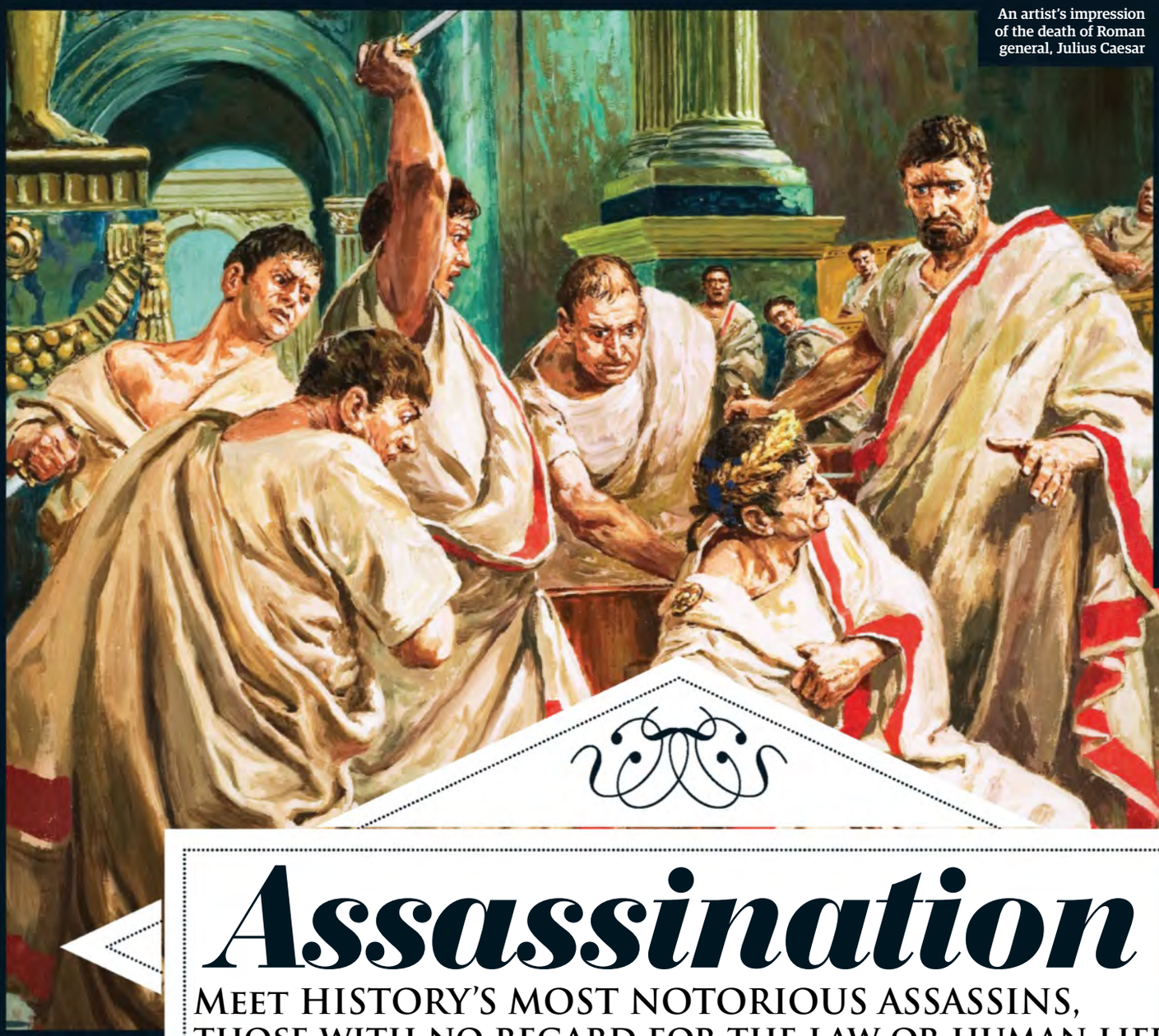
DEFINING MOMENT

SPIN DOCTOR

Mahatma Gandhi sits with his spinning wheel (charkha) sometime in the late 1920s. Gandhi brought the charkha into larger use with his teachings and hoped it would assist the people of India achieve self-sufficiency. He used the charkha as a symbol of the Indian independence movement and even included it on early versions of the Indian flag.

Late 1920s

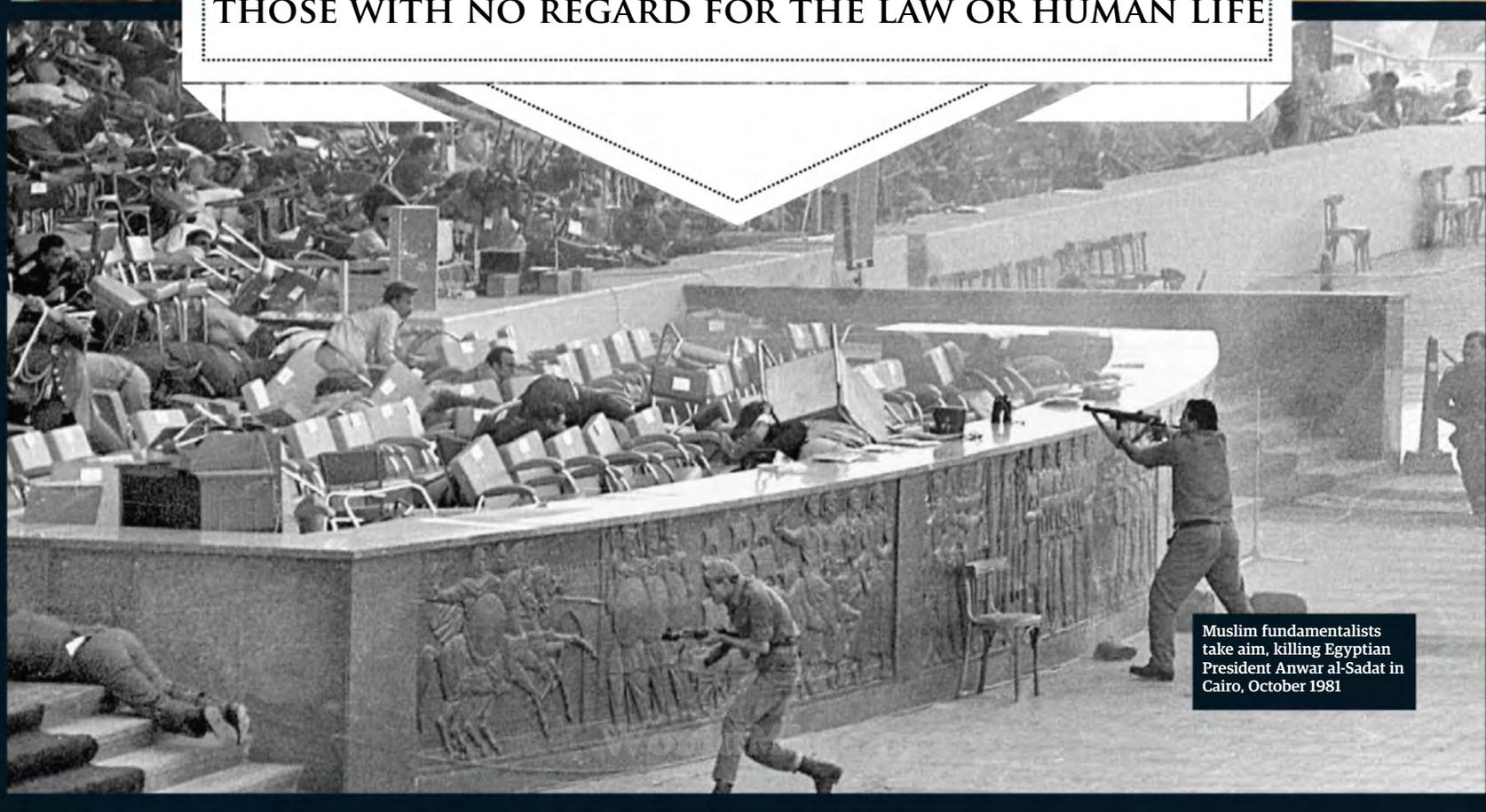




An artist's impression of the death of Roman general, Julius Caesar

Assassination

Meet history's most notorious assassins, those with no regard for the law or human life



Muslim fundamentalists take aim, killing Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat in Cairo, October 1981



Henry IV of France is murdered by Catholic fanatic François Ravaillac



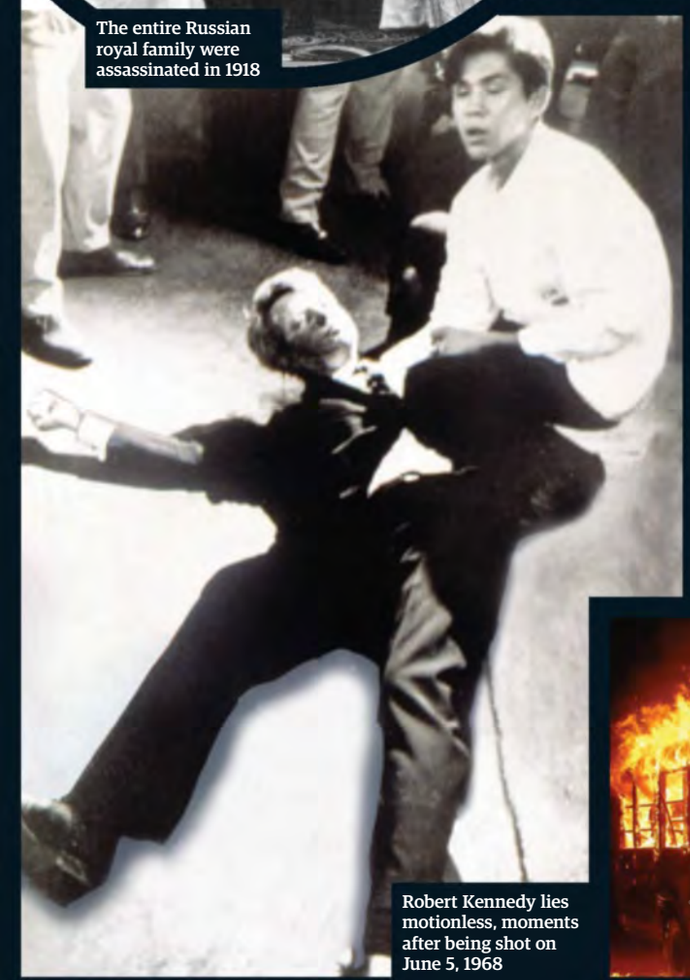
Crowds gather after John Lennon's assassination in 1980



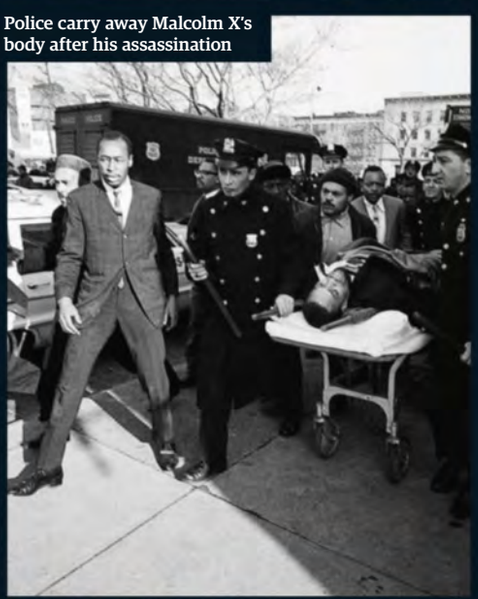
President Reagan was hit by one of the shots fired by John Hinkley



The entire Russian royal family were assassinated in 1918



Robert Kennedy lies motionless, moments after being shot on June 5, 1968



Police carry away Malcolm X's body after his assassination



The aftermath of the suicide bomb that killed Pakistani politician, Benazir Bhutto

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Indian independence leader, Mahatma Gandhi, is cremated after his murder

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One of history's most notorious political assassins

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Assassination across history

ET TU, BRUTE?

ROME 44 BCE

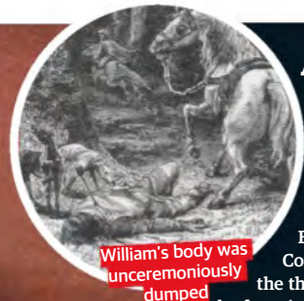
After Julius Caesar's rise to power as the dictator of Rome, he continued to accrue influence and privilege, sculpting the city and its institutions to his will and gaining control over the previously mighty Senate. However, his rule in Rome would be short-lived, as on the Ides of March, he was the victim of the world's most famous assassination.

Due to appear in a session of the Senate, Caesar arrived and was presented by Tillius Cimber with a petition to recall his exiled brother, with other conspirators gathering around to offer support. When Caesar tried to wave away and dismiss the senators, Cimber grabbed Caesar and pulled down his tunic while fellow assassin Servilius Casca produced a dagger and lunged at the dictator.

Caesar reportedly shouted "Casca, you villain, what are your doing?" Casca, who was now struggling with Caesar, quickly entreated his fellow assassins by shouting "Help, brother!", a cue that then led to almost 60 senators attacking Caesar, stabbing him a total of 23 times.



The assassination of Caesar led to years of war



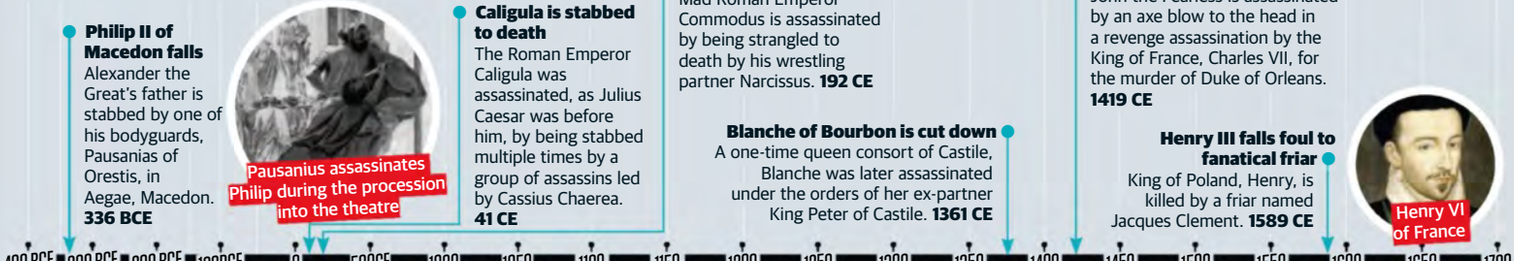
William's body was unceremoniously dumped

A mere hunting accident

ENGLAND 1100

Third son of William I of England, the Conqueror who took the throne of England by force in 1066, William II was King of England from 1087 CE until his death in 1100. William was out on a hunting trip in the New Forest when he was accidentally 'shot by an arrow by one of his own men'. Initially this incident was reported as a tragic accident. However, the fact that the body of William was left discarded where it had fallen in the forest, and that his men were trained archers, indicates that he was actually assassinated.

Assassination timeline



Philip II of Macedon falls
Alexander the Great's father is stabbed by one of his bodyguards, Pausanias of Orestis, in Aegae, Macedon. **336 BCE**

Pausanius assassinates Philip during the procession into the theatre

Caligula is stabbed to death
The Roman Emperor Caligula was assassinated, as Julius Caesar was before him, by being stabbed multiple times by a group of assassins led by Cassius Chaerea. **41 CE**

Emperor Commodus is strangled to death
Mad Roman Emperor Commodus is assassinated by being strangled to death by his wrestling partner Narcissus. **192 CE**

Blanche of Bourbon is cut down
A one-time queen consort of Castile, Blanche was later assassinated under the orders of her ex-partner King Peter of Castile. **1361 CE**

John the Fearless has his head split in two
John the Fearless is assassinated by an axe blow to the head in a revenge assassination by the King of France, Charles VII, for the murder of Duke of Orleans. **1419 CE**

Henry III falls foul to fanatical friar
King of Poland, Henry, is killed by a friar named Jacques Clement. **1589 CE**

Henry VI of France



Darius III of Persia

Darius III is betrayed
Persian ruler Darius III is assassinated by his governors after losing a series of battles against the King of Macedon, Alexander the Great. **330 BCE**

Tiberius Gracchus is clubbed to death
This famous reforming Roman politician was beaten to death by a group of rival senators with clubs and chairs on election day. **133 BCE**

King William II is shot
The son of William the Conqueror was 'accidentally' shot with an arrow by one of his men while out hunting. **1100 CE**



Pope Benedict XI at his coronation

Pope Benedict XI is poisoned
After only eight months as head of the Catholic Church, Benedict suddenly dies from an assassin's poison. **1304 Ce**

Louis I's life is extinguished
Louis, Duke of Orleans, is assassinated by a group of armed men under the Duke of Burgundy, John the Fearless. **1407 CE**



Louis, Duke of Orleans

Henry VI lives no more
King Henry VI is assassinated by catholic fanatic François Ravaillac by being stabbed on the Rue de la Ferronnerie, Paris. **1610 CE**



A troublesome priest despatched ENGLAND 1170

When Henry II's son, Henry the Young King, was crowned without abiding to Thomas Becket's, the Archbishop of Canterbury, privilege of coronation, Becket excommunicated the other archbishops who had held the ceremony. On hearing of what Becket had done, Henry is reported to have said 'Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?" Upon hearing this, knights Reginald FitzUrse, Hugh de Morville, William de Tracy and Richard le Breton rode immediately for Canterbury, stormed the Cathedral and 'got rid' of Becket.

Conrad of Montferrat

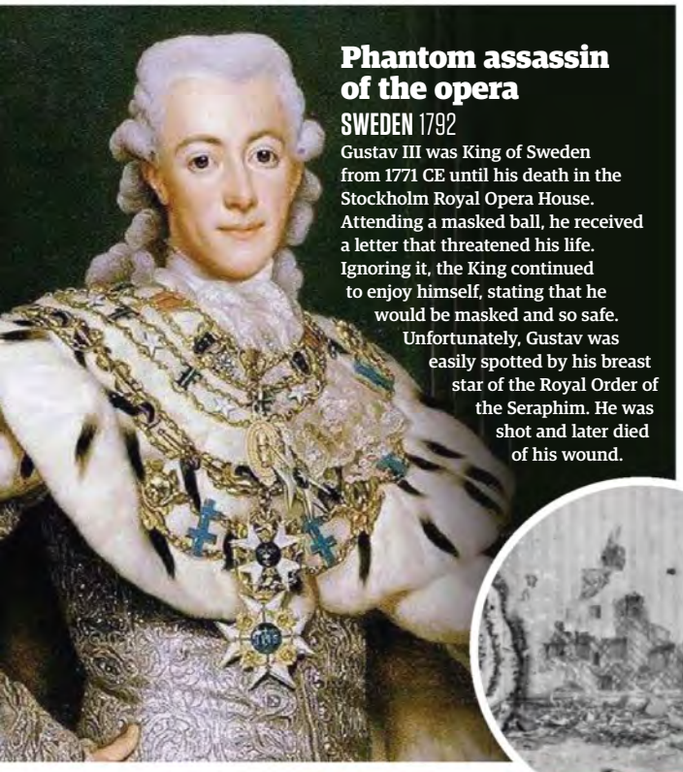
ISRAEL 1192

A famous Italian nobleman and key player in the Third Crusade, Conrad of Montferrat was de facto and then outright King of Jerusalem from 1190 CE until his murder by the legendary Hashshashin. His demise came as he was travelling to dine with a friend in Acre, a city positioned in modern-day northern Israel. As he walked to the rendezvous two of the elite Muslim assassins, the Hashshashin, stabbed him multiple times in the back. His guards killed one of the assassins and captured the other but Conrad lay dead in a pool of his own blood.



Conrad was a key player in the Third Crusade

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Phantom assassin of the opera

SWEDEN 1792

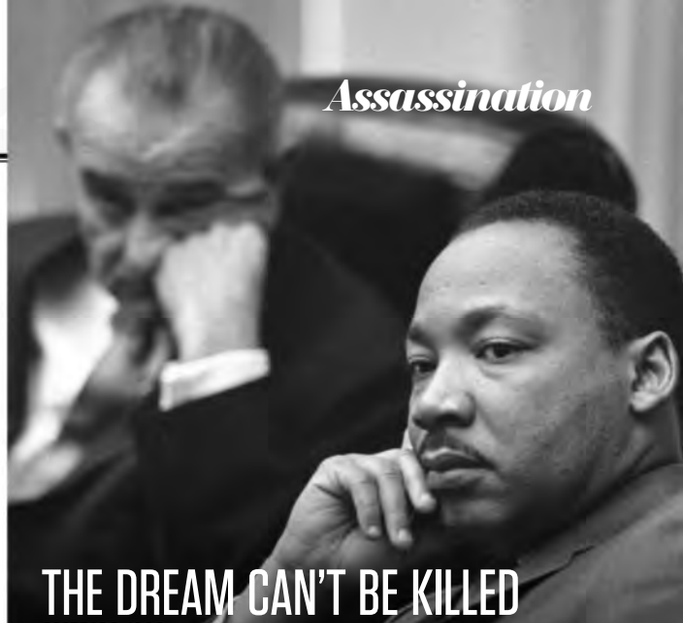
Gustav III was King of Sweden from 1771 CE until his death in the Stockholm Royal Opera House. Attending a masked ball, he received a letter that threatened his life. Ignoring it, the King continued to enjoy himself, stating that he would be masked and so safe. Unfortunately, Gustav was easily spotted by his breast star of the Royal Order of the Seraphim. He was shot and later died of his wound.

Imperial Russia dies

RUSSIA 1918

After the October Revolution, where the Bolshevik movement had seized power from the Kerensky government of Russia, the Romanov royal family was evacuated to Tobolsk and placed in a former governor's mansion in 1917. However, with Russia firmly under Bolshevik control, they were transferred to the town of Yekaterinburg and imprisoned in the two-story Ipatiev House. On the night of 17 July of the same year, the entire royal family was woken, told to dress and then escorted to the house's basement. There they were fired upon by a group of Bolshevik executioners, who peppered them with bullets.

The basement of the Ipatiev house where the Romanov family was murdered



THE DREAM CAN'T BE KILLED

AMERICA 1968

After delivering his famous 'I've been to the mountaintop' speech, civil rights activist Martin Luther King attempted to travel to Memphis, Tennessee. His flight was delayed, however, by a bomb threat to his life. Finally travelling, King checked into room 306 of the Lorraine Motel and began preparing for another speech in support of equal pay. However, as King leaned against the balcony of the room, a bullet entered his right cheek, smashed his jaw and shattered his spinal cord before lodging in his shoulder. King had being shot by James Earl Ray and was pronounced dead an hour later.



Ivan VI lived a short life

Ivan VI Antonovich is removed from office
After being deposed as an infant and spending years in solitary confinement, Ivan is stabbed multiple times by soldiers of Catherine II. **1764 CE**

Alexander II is blown sky high
Despite riding in a bullet-proof carriage this Russian monarch was blown up by a series of bombs in Saint Petersburg. **1881 CE**

William McKinley taken out by anarchist
Another US President to bite the dust, McKinley was shot by anarchist Leon Czolgosz at Buffalo, New York. **1901 CE**



William McKinley killed by an anarchist

The Black Hand strikes
19-year-old Gavrilo Princip shoots and assassinates the Austro-Hungarian Archduke in Sarajevo. **1914 CE**

Mahatma Gandhi is struck down
After helping India gain its independence from Britain, Gandhi was shot by Hindu fanatic Nathuram Godse as he walked to prayer. **1948 CE**



Gandhi gained worldwide recognition for his peaceful protests

Yigal kills Yitzhak
The Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by right-wing radical Yigal Amir. **1995 CE**

1750 | 1800 | 1850 | 1900 | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010



John Wilkes Booth pulls the trigger

Abraham Lincoln is killed by famous actor
While watching the play, *Our American Cousin*, the US President is assassinated by Confederacy supporter John Wilkes Booth. **1865 CE**

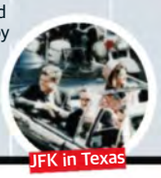
The Japanese strike at Empress Myeongseong
Japanese assassins fight their way through the Empress' bodyguards before stabbing and burning her corpse. **1895 CE**



The murderers of Empress Myeongseong

Leon Trotsky is made ice-cold
After leading the Left opposition against Joseph Stalin in the Twenties, Trotsky is assassinated by Stalinist agent Ramon Mercader by an ice axe to the head. **1940 CE**

John F. Kennedy hit by sniper
US President JFK is shot and assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas, Texas. **1963 CE**



JFK in Texas

Theo van Gogh is cut down
The famous film-maker Gogh is shot multiple times and then stabbed by assassin Mohammed Bouyeri. **2004 CE**



The indestructible mystic monk

RUSSIA 1916

Grigory Rasputin had already survived an assassination attempt in 1914 when two years later he was poisoned with cyanide before being shot with a revolver. He still didn't die though and, as the assassins made their escape, he quickly rose and lunged at the leader before the other assassins unloaded their revolvers into him. His body was bound, wrapped in a sheet and thrown into the Neva River.

Army annihilate Anwar el-Sadat

EGYPT 1981

Following his completion of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, Anwar was killed by fundamentalist officers of the Egyptian Army and rioting spread in Egypt.



Former President of Egypt, Anwar el-Sadt

Benazir Bhutto blown to pieces

PAKISTAN 2007

Ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto was shot and then blown up at a political rally. She was the first-ever woman PM in an Islamic state and had been campaigning for a third term having twice served twice before in the position, in 1988-1990 and 1993-1996.



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Hall of fame

10 INFAMOUS ASSASSINS

Some have been motivated by political reasons, while others are cold-blooded killers out for financial reward. Meet ten of the world's most notorious assassins



After killing Jesse James, Ford made a living posing for photos with the gun that he used

ROBERT FORD

AMERICAN 1862-1892

Robert Ford was infatuated with the exploits of Jesse James and his gang. In 1880 Ford met and joined the gang and when he was arrested on suspicion of being involved in a murder, he confessed that he knew where James - who had a $10,000 bounty on his head - was and he was told if he killed James he would receive the reward and a full pardon. On 3 April 1882 Ford shot Jesse James in the back as he was adjusting a crooked picture and booked his place in infamy as 'the coward, Robert Ford'.

Carlos the Jackal

VENEZUELAN 1949-

Arguably the most notorious modern-day assassin, Carlos the Jackal was born in Venezuela. How much his later actions were influenced by political ideas or by money is a matter for debate, but his taking over of the OPEC building and holding hostages made international headlines. Currently serving a life prison sentence in France for murder, it's not known how many suffered at this assassin's hands.



Carlos the Jackal is currently serving a life sentence in Paris for murder



Brigitte Mohnhaupt

GERMAN 1949 -

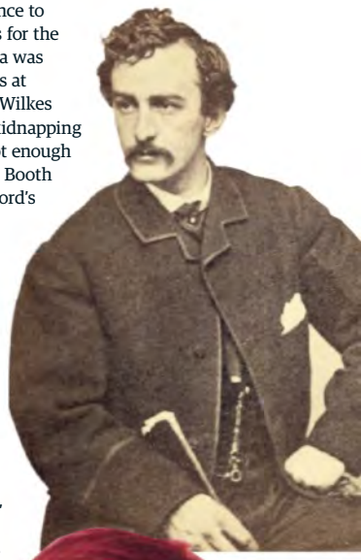
Described as the most dangerous woman in Germany, Mohnhaupt made the news more recently when her release from prison caused a national outcry. She was a member of the Red Army Faction who were against what they saw as capitalist oppression. Captured in 1982, she was convicted of involvement in nine murders. After serving the minimum sentence she was released on parole in 2007 - despite never having shown any remorse.

"Guns are neat little things, aren't they? They can kill people with very little effort" ***John Hinckley Jnr***

John Wilkes Booth

AMERICAN 1838-1865

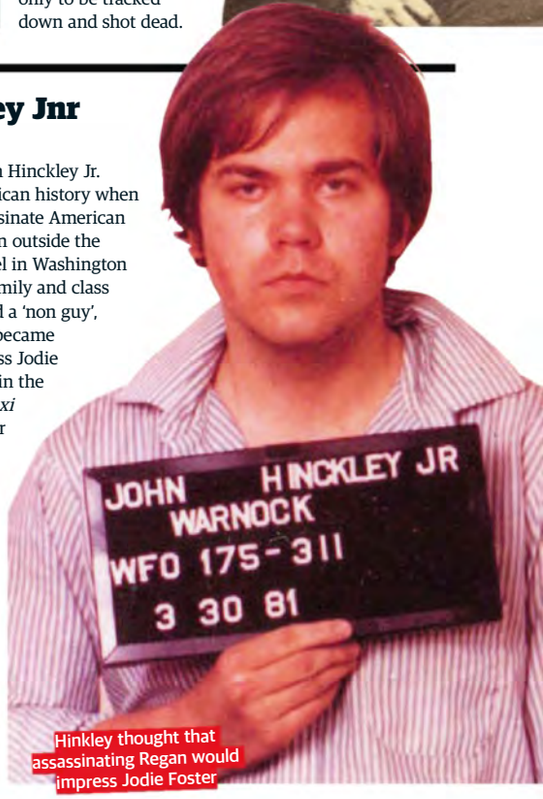
Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address as President, where he outlined his abhorrence to slavery and his plans for the rebuilding of America was one of his best. It was at that point that John Wilkes Booth realised that kidnapping the President was not enough - he had to be killed. Booth knew the layout to Ford's theatre well and as he approached the President's box did not find any guards - the man charged with protecting the president has gone to a bar during the interval and hadn't yet returned. On 14 April 1865 he shot and killed Lincoln and went on the run, only to be tracked down and shot dead.



John Hinckley Jnr

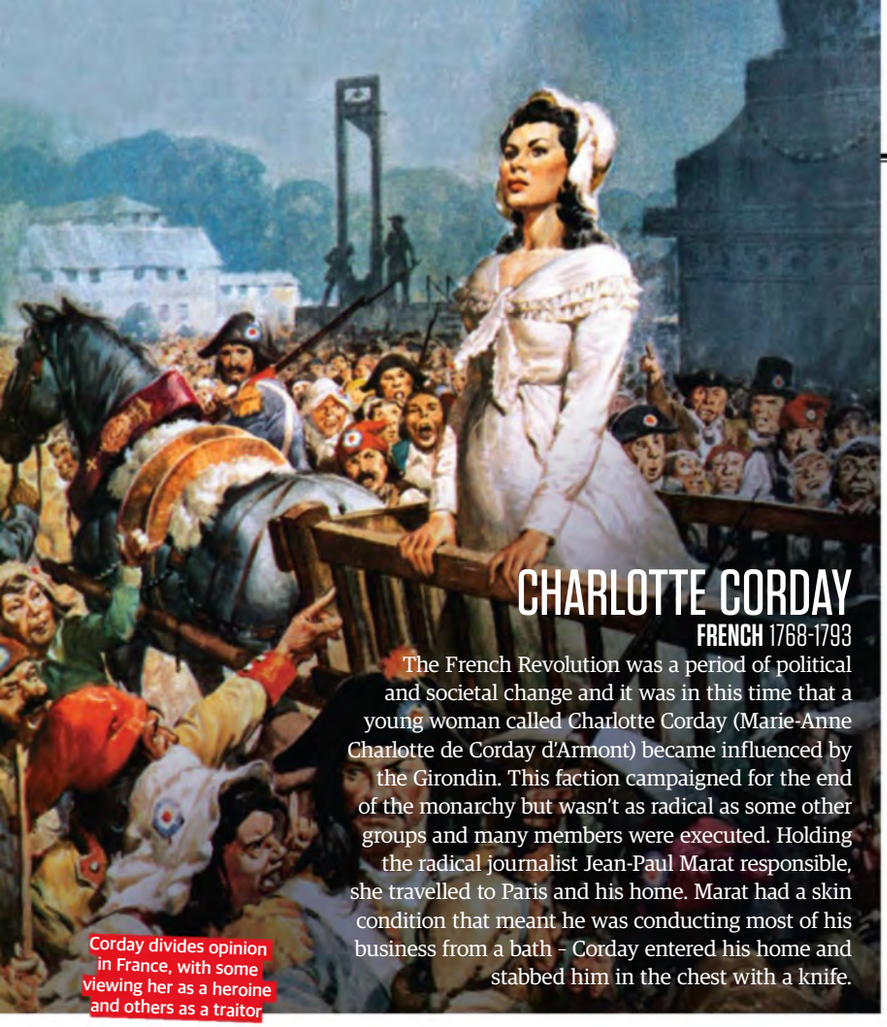
AMERICAN 1955-

Psychopathic loner John Hinckley Jr. made his mark in American history when in 1981 he tried to assassinate American President Ronald Reagan outside the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington D.C. Described by his family and class mates as a shy loner and a 'non guy', after leaving school he became obsessed with the actress Jodie Foster, having seen her in the Martin Scorsese film *Taxi Driver*. After stalking her for a number of years, as well as sending her letters and poems, he decided that the best way to impress her would be to assassinate Ronald Reagan. His attempt failed. During his trial he was found to be insane and was later confined to St Elizabeths psychiatric Hospital in Washington D.C.



Hinkley thought that assassinating Regan would impress Jodie Foster

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Corday divides opinion in France, with some viewing her as a heroine and others as a traitor

CHARLOTTE CORDAY

FRENCH 1768-1793

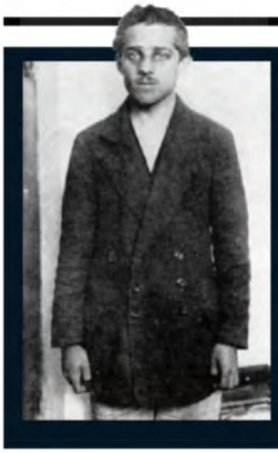
The French Revolution was a period of political and societal change and it was in this time that a young woman called Charlotte Corday (Marie-Anne Charlotte de Corday d'Armont) became influenced by the Girondin. This faction campaigned for the end of the monarchy but wasn't as radical as some other groups and many members were executed. Holding the radical journalist Jean-Paul Marat responsible, she travelled to Paris and his home. Marat had a skin condition that meant he was conducting most of his business from a bath - Corday entered his home and stabbed him in the chest with a knife.



Balthasar Gerard

SPANISH 1557- 1584

Assassinations occur for a multitude of reasons, but the actions of Balthasar Gerard combined arguably the two most common - money and politicas. In the early 16th century. The Netherlands had been part of Spanish territory, but, galvanised by William I, Prince of Orange, had fought and won a war and its freedom. William now had a price on his head, with King Philip II of Spain offering a reward and one would-be assassin had already failed in 1582. Gerard - who believed William had betrayed the Spanish king and religion by turning his back on Catholicism - would not. He presented himself to William as the son of a Calvinist and begged for money to buy a new set of clothes, but bought a pair of pistols instead and on 10 July shot William point-bank in the chest. Gerard was subjected to horrific torture and then executed.



GAVRILO PRINCIP

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA 1894-1918

Although it is too simplistic to state that one event led to the start of WWI, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by 19-year-old Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo certainly lit the touch paper. Princip attempted suicide on his capture but couldn't keep down his out-of-date cyanide poison. Under the legal age for the death penalty, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Held in poor conditions Princip contracted tuberculosis and died in April 1918.



Historians have cast doubt on the theory that Caesar was the biological father of Brutus

Marcus Brutus

ROMAN 85-42 BCE

As a politician favoured by Caesar, Brutus might have been expected to be content with the greatest man in Rome staying in power. However, Brutus was one of numerous politicians who felt that Rome should not be subservient to one man and, on 44 BCE he was one of many senators who stabbed Caesar to death. His part in the killing has since been immortalised in the line: 'et tu, Brute?'. Years of civil war and death followed, as power struggles intensified, and Rome was never the same.

JAMES EARL RAY

AMERICAN 1928-1998

On 4 April 1968 a man from Illinois killed a figure that gave hope to millions and had galvanised a movement; the man pulling the trigger was James Earl Ray and Martin Luther King was in his target sights. A drifter with a string of convictions to his name, Ray rented a room near where King was staying and shot the civil rights leader as he was standing on a balcony outside his motel room. The manhunt - at the time one of the most expensive in FBI history - eventually tracked Ray down in London and he was sentenced to 99 years.



Ray died in prison in Nashville, Tennessee in 1998

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NOTORIOUS ASSASSINATIONS

ASSASSINATION OF ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND

SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 28 JUNE 1914

Of all the assassinations throughout history, that of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was both one of the most climactic and far-reaching in terms of consequences. The shooting of Ferdinand on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo, the modern-day capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, shook the entire world and was a major step towards the outbreak of the First World War. Many historians argue that the shooting led to the deaths of almost 10 million soldiers and countless other civilians.

The assassination was born out of a desire for Austria-Hungary's South-Slav provinces to be split from their vast empire and incorporated into Greater Serbia; a desire which had led to heightened disputes between Serbia and its neighbouring countries. This came to a head in late 1913 when Bosnian Orthodox Serb Danilo Ilić, the leader of a Serbian Black Hand terrorist cell in Sarajevo, decided to go and speak to one of the organisation's founders - Serbian Colonel C. A. Popovic. The Black Hand was a secret military society tasked with reclaiming the historical Serbian territories currently controlled by Austria-Hungary or other powers. Its motto was 'Unification or Death' and it specialised in covert operations designed to further Serbia's cause. However, Ilić no longer believed engagement in such a manner would lead to success, making a case to Popovic that a campaign of direct action should be taken instead. After temporarily considering the Governor of Bosnia as an assassination target, it was eventually agreed that Archduke Ferdinand would be their victim.

The plan was to strike during the Archduke's visit to the city in June. The weaponry for the assassination arrived with a team of young Serbian and Bosnian Serb assassins that Ilić had recruited on 26 May, and by 4 June the six assassins were all in Sarajevo and ready to act. Along with a selection of hand guns, bombs and knives, Ilić also distributed suicide pills to the assassins - truly 'unification or death'. On the following day, Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, along with his wife Duchess Sophie.

Despite the plans, the assassins and their masters in the Black Hand were caught, imprisoned or executed. The death of one man set in train a series of events that led to the Empire of Austria-Hungary issuing an ultimatum in July of that year. This included a list of demands that Serbia was to accept within 48 hours or face having Austria-Hungary's ambassador removed from the country. Serbia did not accept, and on 28 July both sides mobilised their armies. Due to a series of alliances struck between the Great Powers of Europe, this forced Russia, France, Britain and Germany, among others, to take sides and begin the most brutal, bloody and costly war that the world had ever seen.



DOUBLE PHAETON

The Archduke and his wife were riding in an open-top Gräf & Stift Double Phaeton car at the time of their assassination. This car was part of a motorcade of six vehicles, which carried among others the Mayor and Chief of Police of Sarajevo. On 28 June 1914, it was subjected to a bomb attack that wounded 20 people.

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LAST WORDS

According to the memoir of Count Franz von Harrach, who was standing on the car's sideboard when the assassination took place, Archduke Franz Ferdinand's last words were "Sophie, Sophie, don't die. Stay alive for the children!", before stating when asked if he was injured "It is nothing."

WEAPON OF DEATH

The weapon used by the assassin, Gavrilo Princip, was a Frabrique National model 1910 semi-automatic pistol. The gun was Belgian-made and used .380 ACP ammunition. When Princip fired on that fateful day, he did so twice from a distance of 1.5 metres, his shots hitting both the Archduke and his wife.

THE BLACK HAND

The assassins were part of an underground splinter cell of Bosnian Serbs coordinated by Danilo Ilić, a member of the secret military society the Black Hand. The organisation's objective was to create an event that would lead to the splitting off of Austria-Hungary's South-Slav provinces from the empire.

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Austria-Hungary



FRANZ FERDINAND

FOR HIS KINGDOM

Archduke of Austria, Royal Prince of Hungary and Bohemia Franz Ferdinand was unpopular among Serbs, who wanted to reclaim land.

Strengths A leader of great energy and physical prowess.

Weakness Distant and prone to bouts of hysteria.



1911 DOUBLE PHAETON

AN EXPENSIVE LUXURY

Offering good speed and excellent all-round visibility, the 1911 Double Phaeton was considered a luxury item for the time.

Strengths Much more mobile than foot or horse-mounted units.

Weakness Poorly armoured and cumbersome in tight spaces.



STEYR M1912 PISTOL

DURABLE AND POPULAR

The Austrian-made semi-automatic pistol offered impressive stopping power at short range and was small enough to be easily concealed.

Strengths A reliable pistol carried by Austria-Hungary police and army.

Weakness Poor shooting accuracy over long distances.

01 Motorcade forms

On the morning of the 28th Archduke Franz Ferdinand arrives by train in Sarajevo. Ferdinand is met by Governor Oskar Potiorek and they are led to a waiting motorcade. They step into the third car of six, a Gräf & Stift 1911 Double Phaeton, an open-topped sports car.

10 United in death

When he thought all had been lost, that he had failed his and Ilić's cause, Princip saw a second chance. Like a flash Princip bolted towards the car and drawing his semi-automatic pistol fired twice from a distance of approximately 1.5 metres. The first shot hit the Archduke in his jugular vain, the second hit his wife in the abdomen. Both were killing strikes and Sophie died almost immediately with the Archduke following minutes later.

02 THE TRAP IS SET

Assassination mastermind Danilo Ilić begins to distribute his assassins on the motorcade route throughout Sarajevo. The six are all members of Young Bosnia and are armed with guns, knives, bombs and suicide pills. As the Archduke's motorcade leaves the station, Ilić paces the route.



03 Mostar Cafe passed

Ilić had placed his first assassin, Muhamed Mehmedbašić, in front of the garden on the city's well-known Mostar Cafe. He was armed with a bomb and was instructed to throw it into the motorcade. Mehmedbašić fails to act, however, as Ferdinand passes, and neither does his accomplice Vaso Čubrilović who is armed with both a bomb and gun.

04 Miljacka river

The Miljacka river snakes it way through Sarajevo, and it was on its banks that Ilić's third assassin, Nedeljko Čabrinović , was positioned to strike. Armed with a bomb, as Ferdinand's motorcade passes at 10:10am he throws the device directly at the Double Phaeton. It rebounds off the convertible's folded roof and bounces under the car following Ferdinand's. The bomb explodes, totalling the car and leaving a crater in the road. 20 passers by are hit by debris and wounded.

05 Pro patria

Čabrinović, deadly deed undertaken, is quickly identified and as he is closed in on, quickly swallows his cyanide pill and jumps from the banks into the Miljacka. The pill does not have the desired affect and after vomiting severely, he lives. He is dragged from the river by police and set upon by survivors of the blast.

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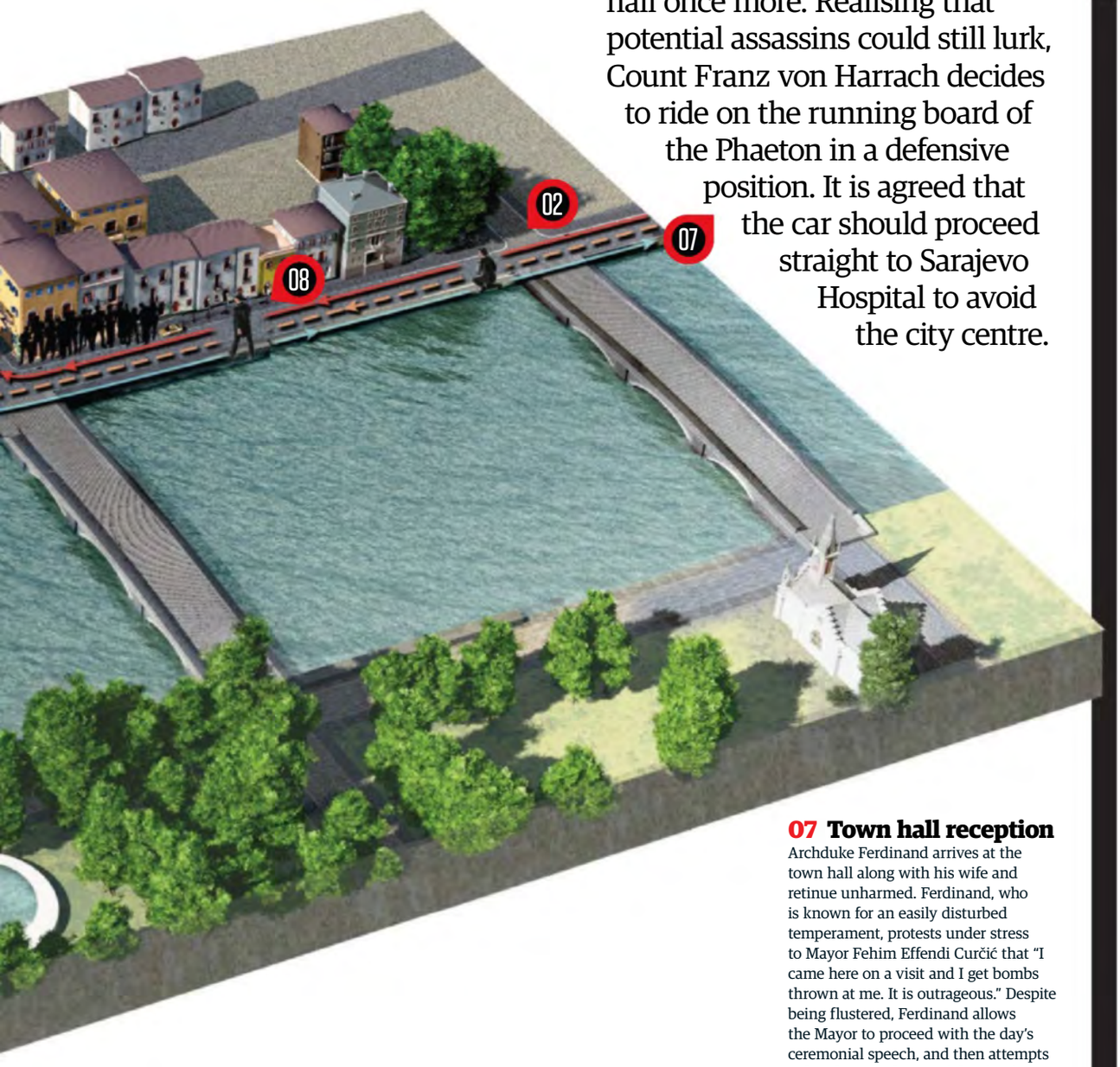
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09 Princip's second chance

Having failed to attack Ferdinand, Gavrilo Princip proceeds to a nearby food shop, Schiller's delicatessen. Upon leaving the eatery, he realises that he is staring at the royal car. The car's driver had taken a wrong turning on its way to the hospital and was now reversing with the Archduke, his wife and retinue still inside in the open-topped vehicle.

08 ADDED PROTECTION

By 10:45am, the reception for the Archduke is completed and he and his retinue leave the city's hall once more. Realising that potential assassins could still lurk, Count Franz von Harrach decides to ride on the running board of the Phaeton in a defensive position. It is agreed that the car should proceed straight to Sarajevo Hospital to avoid the city centre.



07 Town hall reception

Archduke Ferdinand arrives at the town hall along with his wife and retinue unharmed. Ferdinand, who is known for an easily disturbed temperament, protests under stress to Mayor Fehim Effendi Curčić that "I came here on a visit and I get bombs thrown at me. It is outrageous." Despite being flustered, Ferdinand allows the Mayor to proceed with the day's ceremonial speech, and then attempts to brush aside the attack by thanking the people of the city for their ovations.

06 HIGH-SPEED GETAWAY

The remaining motorcade, having realised they were under attack, sped away from the blast site towards Sarajevo town hall, leaving the disabled car behind. Now travelling at high speed, the motorcade screams by Ilić's remaining three assassins – Cvjetko Popović, Gavrilo Princip and Trifun Grabež. They are unable to make their moves.

The Black Hand



DANILO ILIĆ

TEACHER TURNED KILLER

The teacher turned assassin Danilo Ilić became radicalised in the early 1900s. On his capture, he admitted everything to try to avoid death.

Strengths Well trained in planning covert operations.

Weakness No real military experience and tactical flexibility.



ASSASSINS

LURKING IN THE SHADOWS

Some were well-trained by the militaries loyal to the ruler they were trying to kill, others were mere amateurs with personal grudges.

Strengths Covert units that easily blend into crowds.

Weakness Not heavily armed and rely on shock tactics to be effective.



FN 1910 PISTOL

ENDURING WEAPON

Remaining in production until 1983, the simple design and compact reliability of the FN 1910 made it an enduring firearm.

Strengths Compact and can be fired in six-round bursts.

Weakness Poor shooting accuracy over long distances.

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THE Anatomy of A NINJA

COVERT AGENT, BODYGUARD AND ASSASSIN, JAPAN, 15TH CENTURY

SWORD

QUICK AND EASY TO DRAW WAS THE KEY

Named the ninja-to, it is believed that this was a short sword, not the long blade often depicted in films and television. The short length of the sword was useful in tricking opponents into how long it would take to draw and thus give the ninja an advantage – although as a general rule ninjas tried to avoid combat.

HOODED COWL

REMAINING UNDETECTED IS THE FIRST PRIORITY

The hood (or cowl) covered the head and the lower part of the face, leaving just the eyes visible. When ninjas (originally known as shinobi) were sent on secret missions – such as assassinations – or were hiding, it was important that their identity remained a secret.

SHINOBI SHOZOKU

THE OUTFIT THAT WAS ADAPTED TO CIRCUMSTANCES

Clothes would be picked to suit a particular goal and circumstance – there was not one uniform. If a task was to spy during the day in a rural area, then dressing like a farmer was appropriate to blend in. It was only on night missions that the more familiar all-black shinobi 'shozoku' outfit might be worn.

BOOTS

IMPORTANT FOR GETTING INTO GOOD OBSERVATIONAL AREAS

Every aspect of the ninja's outfit had to serve a specific purpose, and their footwear was no exception. Ninjas often wore boots with ashiko, spiked claws similar to crampons, on the bottom to make it easier to climb. These spikes also served as a useful close-range weapon.

THROWING STARS

A FIVE STAR SECONDARY CLOSE-RANGE WEAPON

Also known as shuriken, these were primarily used to slash and stab at opponents with their razor-sharp edges. When thrown, it would normally be to cause a distraction to enable the ninja to proceed undetected, rather than as a weapon.

GRAPPLING HOOK

THE KIT THAT PROVIDED ACCESS FOR HARD TO REACH PLACES

The kaginawa was a climbing device that consisted of a prolonged hook with a length of rope attached. It was used to assist in the climbing of walls and to help navigate across large gaps. It could also be used as a weapon and was useful because of its relatively large range.

ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY

A HIDDEN ARSENAL FOR ANY OCCASION

Due to the nature of their missions, ninjas had to be able to adapt to changing circumstances. They were assisted by tools including poison, explosive powders, poison darts and healing herbs. The exact makeup of the tools taken depended on what their assignment was.

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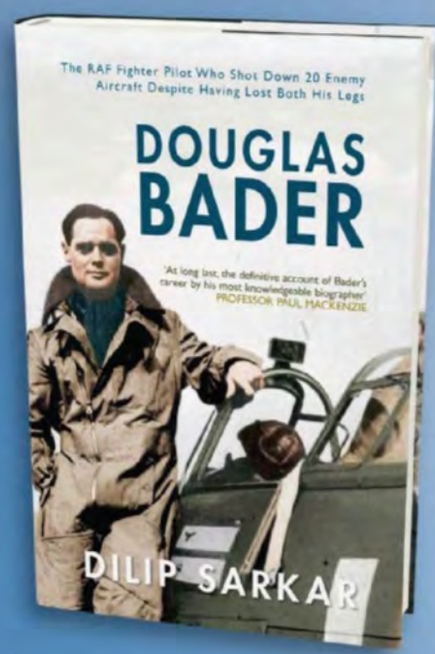


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INSIDE HISTORY

ASSASSINATING BIN LADEN

ABBOTTABAD, PAKISTAN, 2 MAY, 2011

In the early hours of on 2 May 2011, two US army stealth helicopters flew quietly through the dark skies of northern Pakistan. They were flying low, using 'nap-of-the-earth' techniques to stay below Pakistani radar. The occupants of the helicopters were tense; they were in an allied country but if they were caught here they would have to fight their way out. Inside the cramped compartments sat 23 of the most well-trained soldiers on earth: US Navy SEAL Team Six.

As they approached the small Pakistani town of Abbottabad, a lurch from one of the helicopters and an engine whine surprised the SEALs – the helicopter was caught in its own rotor wash kicked up from the walls of the compound. The pilot warned them that they would have to abandon fast roping down as the helicopter crashed in an animal pen, and the SEALs checked each other for injuries. There were none. The mission was still a go.

An alleyway and a courtyard lay between the SEALs and the front door of the apartment. Locked doors would have to be blown off with C-4. Short, sharp explosions rippled through the quiet night until, finally, the SEALs were at the front door. A man wielding an AK-47 appeared, but was quickly shot by one of the team before they proceeded into the house to clear the floors.

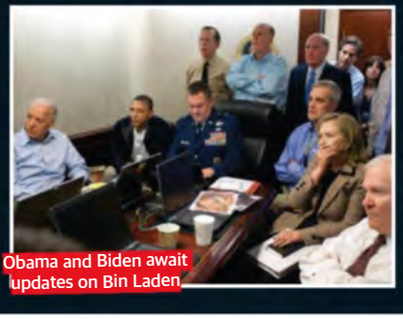
The team in the second helicopter landed away from the apartment to prevent interference but the loud crash of the helicopter and explosions had aroused interest. A Pakistani interpreter told the crowd to go away; the longer they stayed, the more likely Pakistani police or military would show up.

Muffled shots rang out in the house and the terrified women and children were cuffed and secured in the darkness. One of the SEALs caught sight of a thin-bearded man peeking around a door on the third floor. The SEALs stacked up on the door and entered the room. Two women were shielding the man. One screamed and rushed the first SEAL through the door – he shot her in the thigh. He then bundled the two women into a bear hug, fearing suicide jackets. The second SEAL turned to the thin-bearded man and shot him, killing him instantly.

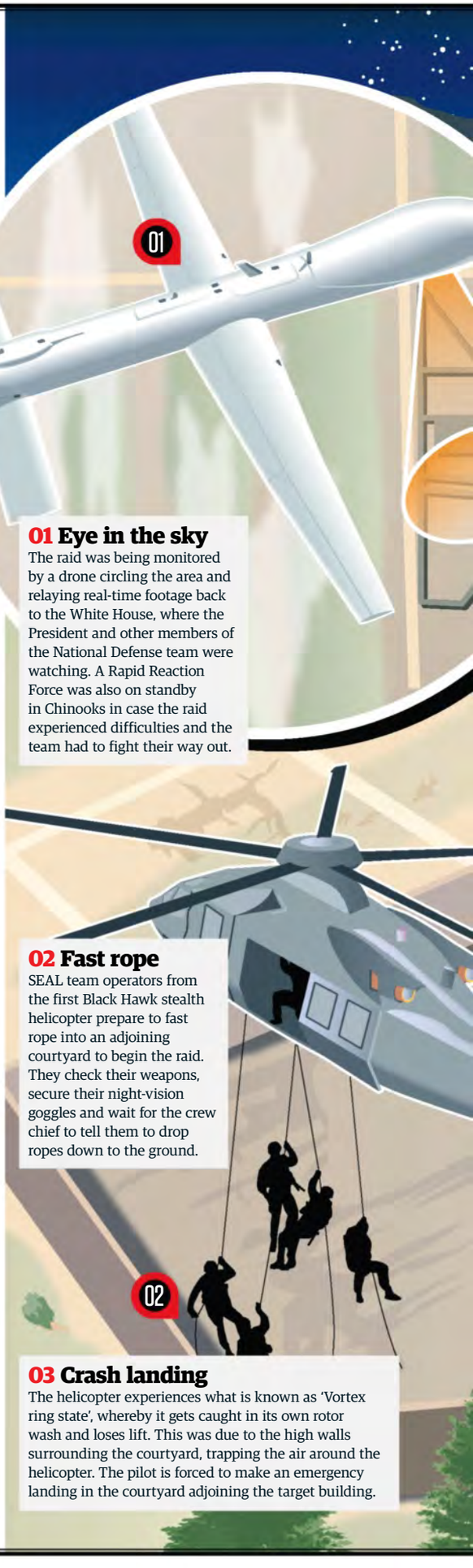
The SEAL team member radioed back to Washington DC: "For God and country – Geronimo, Geronimo, Geronimo." In the White House, President Barack Obama solemnly declared: "We got him." Osama Bin Laden was dead.

How do we know this?

Much of the information of Operation Neptune Spear is classified, however some members of the Navy SEAL team on the raid and the US government have released some basic details of what happened that night. These have included press interviews, most notably with the *New Yorker* as well as one of the members of the SEAL team releasing a book called *No Easy Day*, which details the events of the raid. Eyewitness accounts of the scene have also been obtained from Pakistani civilians who were present as the raid occurred.



Obama and Biden await updates on Bin Laden



01 Eye in the sky
The raid was being monitored by a drone circling the area and relaying real-time footage back to the White House, where the President and other members of the National Defense team were watching. A Rapid Reaction Force was also on standby in Chinooks in case the raid experienced difficulties and the team had to fight their way out.

02 Fast rope
SEAL team operators from the first Black Hawk stealth helicopter prepare to fast rope into an adjoining courtyard to begin the raid. They check their weapons, secure their night-vision goggles and wait for the crew chief to tell them to drop ropes down to the ground.

03 Crash landing
The helicopter experiences what is known as 'Vortex ring state', whereby it gets caught in its own rotor wash and loses lift. This was due to the high walls surrounding the courtyard, trapping the air around the helicopter. The pilot is forced to make an emergency landing in the courtyard adjoining the target building.

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09 Escape

Before the SEAL teams leave they destroy the downed helicopter to prevent the stealth technology and sensitive information in the cockpit from falling into the wrong hands. They exit the area via the remaining Black Hawk and a Chinook helicopter scrambled after the first Black Hawk went down.

07 Geronimo

The SEAL team finds Bin Laden in an upstairs bedroom/film studio along with two of his wives and a computer surrounded by memory cards, CDs and external hard drives. One of his wives tries to rush the lead SEAL; he shoots her in the thigh and bundles the two women into a corner. The second SEAL shoots and kills Bin Laden. The SEALs have now been on Pakistani soil for 18 minutes.

08 The parameter

Neighbours and curious passersby start milling around, attracted by the noise of the explosions and crashed helicopter. Members of the second SEAL team try to keep them away from the compound. One of the team members is a Pakistani interpreter and pretends to be a Pakistani policeman to herd them away.

06 Entry

SEALs enter the target building about ten minutes after the helicopter crash. The rooms are pitch black - the SEALs have cut off the electricity. They work their way up the floors, killing any male occupants of fighting age and securing women and children with cuff binders. They eventually reach the third floor.

04 Mission go

The SEAL team recovers from the helicopter crash and signal back to HQ that they are continuing with the operation, to much relief in Washington. The SEALs then head towards the first door at the other end of the courtyard. It turns out to be locked and will have to blown open with C-4. The second helicopter is already securing the perimeter.

05 Second team

The second helicopter was supposed to hover over the roof of the target building and fast rope the second SEAL team down. This second team would then work their way down the building while the first team worked its way up. The pilot, unsure if the first helicopter is taking fire, scraps this plan and lands in an outside grassy area. The SEALs must break into the building on foot.

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How to PROTECT A PRESIDENT

US SECRET SERVICE TIPS ON PROTECTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES 1862-

The president of the United States holds at his command the might of the US military, the strength of US business and financial institutions, and the launch codes to hundreds of nuclear weapons. He has the influence to enforce peace and unleash war on a global scale, so it is no surprise that he has enemies, many of whom want him dead. It is the job of the Secret Service and his personal bodyguard to protect him and keep him safe. We reveal their tops tips on how to go about protecting the most powerful man in the world...

TOP GUN BODYGUARDS

TIM MCCARTHY
WASHINGTON, 1981

Tim McCarthy threw himself in front of President Reagan when sociopath John Hinkley, Jr. tried to shoot him. Afterwards he would say he was relieved that he was shot and not the president.

CLINT HILL
DALLAS, 1963

Clint Hill was the agent who climbed onto John F. Kennedy's limo after the president was shot. He and Kennedy's wife, Jackie, tried to stem the blood pouring from the president's neck.

NICK ZARVOS
LAUREL, MARYLAND, 1972

Nick Zarvos took a bullet in the throat for presidential candidate George Wallace, after Wallace was shot by emotionally disturbed loner Arthur Bremer. He has since been awarded the highest commendation within the service.

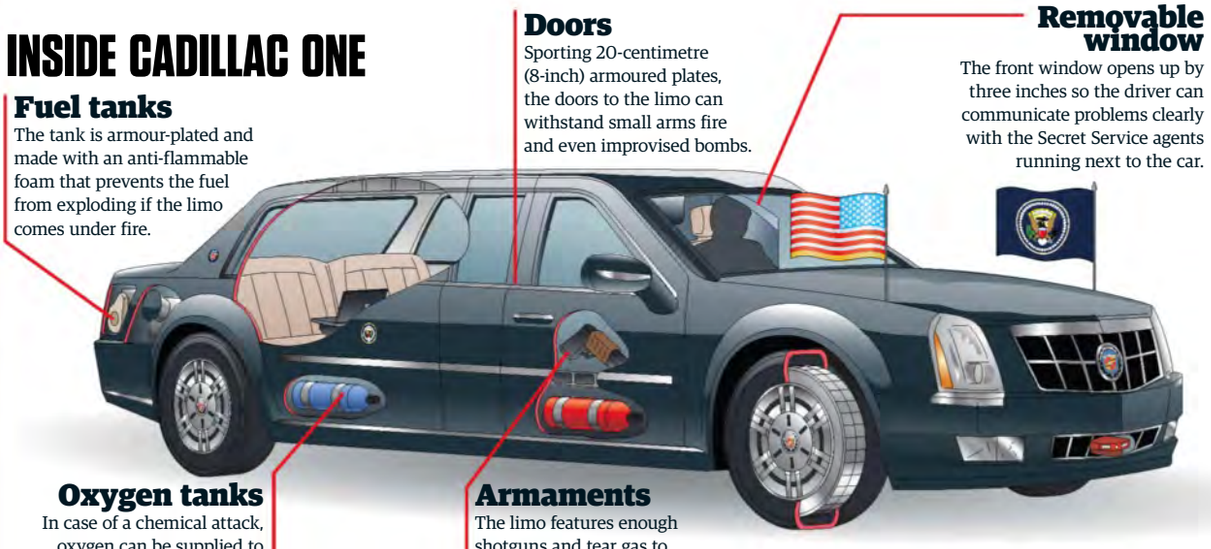
LESLIE W. COFFELT
WASHINGTON, 1950

Leslie Coffelt died protecting President Truman against a would be assassin. Griselio Torresola shot Coffelt at close range, and despite his wounds, Coffelt shot him before he could kill Truman.

DAVID DERICKSON
WASHINGTON, 1862-1863

Captain David Derickson served as Abraham Lincoln's bodyguard during the dangerous years of civil war, staying by his side night and day, and was even rumoured to have slept in his bed.

INSIDE CADILLAC ONE



Fuel tanks
The tank is armour-plated and made with an anti-flammable foam that prevents the fuel from exploding if the limo comes under fire.

Doors
Sporting 20-centimetre (8-inch) armoured plates, the doors to the limo can withstand small arms fire and even improvised bombs.

Removable window
The front window opens up by three inches so the driver can communicate problems clearly with the Secret Service agents running next to the car.

Oxygen tanks
In case of a chemical attack, oxygen can be supplied to the president via canisters underneath the passenger seat.

Armaments
The limo features enough shotguns and tear gas to guarantee the president's safety no matter the danger.





01 Get trained up

A good Secret Service agent is well-trained. Head out to the James J. Rowley Training Center and learn how to protect key assets in mock planes, shops, streets and even a mock-up of the White House. Here you will also master armed and unarmed combat, including martial arts and quick takedown techniques.

02 Choose your weapons

Protecting the president of the United States? You had better go armed. Choose from the best close-quarter weapons available, including the compact and reliable Sauer P229 handgun for close protection, and the high firing rate of the Heckler & Koch MP5 submachine gun, for when only overwhelming firepower will do.

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How not to protect a president

On 6 September 1901, William McKinley, the 25th president of the United States, was shot twice – once in the chest and once in the stomach – by the anarchist Leon Czolgosz as he was leaving an exhibition in Buffalo, New York. Czolgosz was allowed to get within just inches of the president with a gun in his hand, which he had disguised by wrapping up in a handkerchief. After respectfully greeting the president, he quickly unwrapped the gun and fired at McKinley. Czolgosz was then wrestled to the ground by presidential bodyguards but it was too late. McKinley was still conscious in the moments after the shooting, allegedly saying to his staff "be careful how you tell my wife". If the pain of the shooting wasn't horrendous enough, McKinley would later die in agony after suffering from untreated gangrene, caused by the wounds he sustained to his stomach during the shooting.





03 Hitch a hard ride

Make sure that the vehicle you are driving can withstand a small war. The Secret Service recommends 'The Beast': a limo with armour plating eight inches thick, featuring GPS communication systems, its own oxygen supply, night vision cameras and glass tough enough to shield against armour-piercing bullets.



04 Know the lay of the land

Make sure where you are going is fit for a president. Check known terrorist or militant groups in the area, sweep for bombs and electronic bugs, and guard all key entry and exit points. Know where the quickest exits are in case you need to get the president out in a hurry. Also watch out for elevated positions, like building windows, in urban areas.



05 Master hand signals

Make sure your gestures are correct. Secret Service agents use hand signals to communicate silently to fellow agents in order to discreetly assess risks. A hands together across the waist means all clear, hands apart means potential danger. Keeping them around the level of your lower ribs leaves you ready for action at the drop of a hat.



06 Be prepared to take a bullet

Don't hesitate to throw yourself in front of the president in the case of an attack. All Secret Service agents are trained to put themselves in the line of fire to keep the president safe, even if it means risking their own lives. Fitness, agility and a lot of guts are a must for this one, and a first aid kit wouldn't go amiss either.

TOP SECRET SERVICE TAKEDOWNS

SHOOTOUT ON PENNSYLVANIA

THE WHITE HOUSE, 2001

A disgruntled public official fired shots at the White House, but was shot in the leg by agents.



MANSON'S REVENGE

CALIFORNIA, 1975

Lynette Fromme, a member of the Charles Mason cult, raised a gun to Gerald Ford and was quickly tackled to the ground.



COPYCAT KILLER

LOS ANGELES, 1979

A plot to kill Jimmy Carter by two men whose names spelt 'Lee Harvey Osvaldo' was thwarted after one was found with a gun.



TRUMAN'S LETTERS

THE WHITE HOUSE, 1947

Letter bombs containing explosive materials were sent to Harry Truman, but the Secret Service were tipped off and intercepted and destroyed them.



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Top 5 facts CARLOS THE JACKAL

A SELF-STYLED POLITICAL ACTIVIST AND ONE THE WORLD'S MOST NOTORIOUS HIRED GUNS

VENEZUELAN, 1949-



01 CARLOS IS NOT HIS REAL NAME

It is alleged that Ilich Ramírez Sánchez was nicknamed 'Carlos' by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine because of his South American roots. When a copy of the novel *Day of the Jackal* was found in his belongings, *The Guardian* newspaper completed his alter ego.

02 He trained in Cuba

Born in Venezuela into a family with clear communist political beliefs – one of his younger siblings was named Lenin – it was always likely this would be an important part of his life. A member of the Venezuelan communist party in his teenage years, he reportedly had his first guerrilla training in Cuba in the mid-1960s before joining the PFLP in the 1970s.

03 He often made mistakes

Despite his reputation as one of the world's most feared assassins, he often failed in his objectives. His early missions were not successful; he shot but did not kill chairman of the Marks and Spencer's retail chain Joseph Edward Sieff in his London home, and in 1975 twice attempted to launch rocket-propelled grenades at Israeli airlines at an airport in France, but missed on both occasions.

04 He escaped capture

His most infamous incident occurred in 1975 when he, along with five other attackers, broke into a building holding a meeting of OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) leaders in Austria. Three people were killed and several wounded as they took over the building before more than 60 hostages were taken. Carlos and his accomplices boarded an aeroplane with 11 of the hostages, all of whom were later released in exchange for a ransom, and Carlos escaped to Algeria.

05 He will spend his life in jail

He was arrested in 1994 by French special forces in Sudan after the Sudanese government sold him out, and by 1997 was convicted of the 1975 killing of two French secret agents and a Lebanese revolutionary. In 2011, he was brought to trial again and found guilty of killing 11 people in bomb attacks in the 1980s, and ordered to serve another life sentence. His appeal failed and he is extremely likely to spend the rest of his life in jail.

ILICH RAMÍREZ SÁNCHEZ (CARLOS THE JACKAL)

Brief Bio

One of the world's best-known assassins, the name Carlos the Jackal was synonymous with assassinations and terrorist attacks for much of the 1970s and 1980s. He was been charged with the murders of 14 people, but the real number is estimated to be much higher – although not as high as he himself claims. In 1994 he was handed over to the French police by the Sudanese government where he was hiding from authorities.

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Heroes & Villains
Hernán Cortés

The adventures of the infamous 16th-century Spanish explorer Hernán Cortés and his brutal conquest of the Americas

Written by Chris Fenton

When Hernán Cortés walked through the burning city of Tenochtitlan in 1521 he couldn't be happier. He'd done it. He had endured the jungle, the heat, the hostile natives and the bureaucratic fools in Spain. He had taken the Americas, destroyed the pagan empire of the Aztecs and opened up its wonders for the glory of Spain and, of course, for himself. He glanced at the looting of the natives' precious metals and the raping of their women in their orderly, architecturally advanced thoroughfares, and dismissed it as fortunes of war; a war that he had won. He could see some of his conquistadors destroy one of the natives' strange idols and force the people around it to bow to the Christian cross. He was doing God's work and as he was about this glorious task, he was making a ton of money for himself. The siege of Tenochtitlan represented the peak of Cortés's blood-stained career in the New World, a career that would destroy cities and slaughter thousands in his endless quest for riches and glory.

Few historical figures match the unquenchable greed of Cortés. He was a man of action out to make his fortune. He wasn't satisfied with a quiet life in the Spanish court listening to the endless bickering and squabbling, or the slow tedium of the Spanish provisional community. After dropping out of Salamanca University in 1501 through boredom, he decided he would strike out on his own, having been shunned by his family as 'mischievous, quarrelsome and a source of trouble.' He travelled to the Spanish port towns, cosmopolitan and wild, where he could reinvent himself among the exotic, tantalising trading communities. He enjoyed their delights - chiefly womanising and gambling - while listening to tales of wondrous opportunity from the sailors and conquistadors back from the New World. They would thrill him with stories of unending glory and fortune, a limitless flow of beautiful, exotic women and the chance to carve a lasting legacy in the virgin lands far across the vast ocean. He'd made up his mind. He would travel to this unexplored land and become part of the cut-throat business of exploration. With this in mind he set out for Santo Domingo (The Dominican Republic) in 1504, having just turned 19.

> Colombus was the first to bring back coco beans from the new world, but it was Cortés who discovered their use as a drink

Cortés's early career in the New World was destructive and brutal. After contracting syphilis from various sexual liaisons in Santo Domingo, he spent seven years conquering and subduing the natives in Cuba with the Spanish conquistadores, earning a fearsome reputation among Spaniard and native alike. But these successes did not satisfy his insatiable thirst for wealth. He heard rumours of a huge city somewhere on the American mainland. A city paved with gold. A city where he could make his fortune. He quickly pulled together an expedition party and asked the governor of Santiago to seek royal assent for an expedition.



Cortés lived in a time when Spain was at the centre of European politics and was the foremost colonial power in the world

Life in the time of Hernán Cortés

Spain - the world's first superpower

Spain's power during the time of Cortés was unparalleled anywhere in Europe. It was a country built on the engine of empire and the colonies in America served only to feed the treasury of the King of Spain and the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Charles used this money to expand his influence, making Spain the key player in Europe.

Religion ruled

Before the reformations in Europe, Catholicism was the dominant religion on the continent. There was no question of religious tolerance – you were either Catholic or a blasphemer. Severe punishments were exacted on anyone denying the word of God or the Christian faith. Spain spread Catholicism to its colonies, making it the dominant religion in Central and Latin America even to this day.

The great unknown

While exploration became a boom industry during this period, much of the Americas in the west and Asia in the east had yet to be explored. While European explorers could trace coastlines and make contact with some indigenous people living near the sea, there was not enough of them to make any lasting discoveries in the vast land masses that stretched beyond the coastlines.

Absolute power

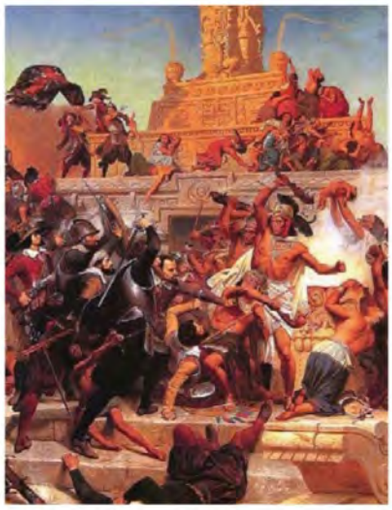
There was no such thing as democracy as we know it during the time of Cortés – Europe was governed with an iron fist by absolute monarchs. This was seen as virtuous since it was God who decided who should rule, not the people. Anyone disputing this hierarchy was not only going against their ruler but also against God and divine right.

The courtly gentlemen

It was the gentlemen of the royal courts that made the wheels turn in the great European countries in the time of Cortés. However, it was not enough to just have this position, you had to behave in a courtly manner and act virtuously and godly at all times. Anyone who didn't would be shunned from court, often to the colonies and away from the centres of power.

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Conquistador solider vs. Aztec warrior

Cortés did battle with thousands of Aztec warriors during his campaign of exploration in Central America. They were a fearsome people from warrior societies based around two predators – the eagle and the jaguar. Many dressed in the image of these animals to terrify enemies. Warriors could only join these societies if they had captured enemy soldiers or become renowned as great warriors through the rank and file of the Aztec military. Their weapon of choice was the macuahuitl sword, a club-like weapon with obsidian blades sticking out of the ends, which the warriors would use to beat their victims to death. Up against these deadly warriors were the conquistadors. They were rarely regular soldiers, although most of Cortés's men would have had some military experience. They were few in number and weighed down with armour and cumbersome European weapons. While they could hold their own against a small number of Aztec warriors, killing them from a distance with musket fire or using swords to slice through their thin armour, there simply weren't enough Conquistadors to take on the Aztecs by themselves. In order to bulk out this tiny army, Cortés employed the help of thousands of tribal warriors who hated the Aztecs and the outcome of many of Cortés's battles depended on these tribesmen.

Rather than wait, he set sail before the expedition was approved – he had his fortune to make.

When Cortés reached the American mainland, he quickly gained the trust of the native tribesmen in Aztec territory, his skill as a cunning negotiator cutting through the barriers of culture and language. He realised that it was the Aztecs who controlled the vast wealth in the region and, because of this, were hated by many of the tribes in the area. Sensing an opportunity to recruit people would help him fulfil his ambitions, so he made trades that sealed allegiances and one of these included a slave girl, Manlintzin, given as a gift by the Tabasco coastal tribe. The Spanish called her Dona Marina and Cortés, whose lust for gold was only exceeded by his lust for women, was delighted with her beauty and interpretation skills. He would quickly form an intimate relationship with her that lasted throughout his adventures in the Americas.

After months of trekking through the jungle, Cortés and his motley band came across something that would take their breath away – the city of Tenochtitlan. Rather than the simple huts and forest dwellings of the tribes they had seen before, they had found 'a city built in water, all made of stone which seemed like an enchanted vision... some of our soldiers asked whether it was not all a dream'. After an initially warm welcome, Montezuma II, ruler of the Aztecs, grew hostile to Cortés, especially when Cortés started acquiring more and more Aztec treasure for himself. Fearing that Montezuma would move against him, Cortés decided it was time to clip the wings of the all-powerful Aztec leader, holding him prisoner and persuading him to act as a vassal for the Spanish; Dona Marina's influence over Montezuma was instrumental in making him hand control of the city over to Cortés, but this was only the beginning of Cortés's problems.

When he landed in what became known as Mexico, Cortés scuttled his fleet to remind his men that there was no going back

Disobeying orders, forming alliances without permission, stealing treasure and running roughshot over other peoples' countries rarely escaped the notice of the Spanish authorities and, by 1520, Spain had sent a force out to the Americas to arrest Cortés. Never a man to be undone by legal problems, especially when money was involved, Cortés marched out of Tenochtitlan, leaving the puppet Montezuma to rule in his stead and met the approaching conquistadors. After some tentative negotiations and a reassurance that there was enough booty for everyone, the soldiers sent to arrest Cortés joined him. However, by the time he returned to Tenochtitlan the Aztecs had rebelled against him after his forces had butchered some of their holy men during a festival. Cortés did not have enough men to put down the rebellion and was running short on food. He took decisive action and fed the Montezuma to the enraged crowd who, according to some accounts, was

"Cortés and his motley band came across something that would take their breath away – the city of Tenochtitlan"



Defining moment

Cortés meets Dona Marina
1519

Cortés meets Malintzin, known as Dona Marina after she is baptised. She becomes instrumental in serving as a translator when his expedition travels further inland, warning him of potential dangers from the various tribes and factions that made up the Aztec nation. Cortés would eventually make her his mistress and she gave him a son, Martin.

Timeline

1485

- **Birth of Hernán Cortés**
 Hernán Cortés is born in Medellín to Martin Cortés de Monroy and Dona Catalina Pizarro Altamarino, a family of relatively minor nobility.
 1485



- **University drop out**
 Cortés decides to drop out of studying law and returns home, much to the disgust and dismay of his parents, who had hopes he would become a lawyer.
 1501
- **The New World**
 Tempted by the countless stories from abroad, Cortés leaves Spain for the New World, heading initially for Santo Domingo, the modern-day Dominican Republic.
 1504
- **American mainland**
 Cortés leaves Santiago (Cuba) and sets sail for the American mainland in search of fortune, fame, adventure and the unknown. He does so without any permission from the Spanish authorities.
 1518
- **First colony**
 Cortés establishes the first colony on the coast of the American mainland, naming it Veracruz, before pushing further inland through the uncharted and treacherous jungle, seeking greater wealth and treasure.
 1519



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stoned to death. Cortés then grabbed as much loot as he could find, gathering his men and fighting his way out of the city. In one of history's worst heists, Cortés overloaded his men with too much gold, causing them to fall through the weak bridges over the lakes surrounding the city as they tried to get away. Many Conquistadors drowned in what is remembered as the 'sorrowful night' and Cortés swore he'd be back to retake his prize.

In the next six months Cortés used his considerable negotiating skills to acquire reinforcements from the Caribbean and make more alliances with the local tribes, acquiring thousands of native warriors. He had also brought with him an unseen ally: small pox. One of his men had passed it on to the Aztecs before they left Tenochtitlan. As the Aztecs starved and suffered the agony of the small pox pustules, Cortés set about destroying the city for four months, building by building, in a systematic and brutal slaughter. When the Aztecs finally surrendered, he took their new leader, Cuauhtemoc, and tortured him to find out where the rest of the treasures of the city were hidden. After months of exhausting warfare he wanted his reward.

The great Aztec Empire, which had stood for hundreds of years as a basin for advanced society in Central America, was in smouldering ruins. From now on it would be known as New Spain, of which Cortés appointed himself leader, but must have suspected there was little chance Spain would allow a man like him to stay in this powerful and politically sensitive position. After

Before being driven out of Tenochtitlan, Cortés's men left behind small pox, which totally devastated the city



Charles V granted him his dues in title and money, he was summoned back to Spain to answer for his persistent disobedience to the state. He cleared his name, however, and continued to explore the world, thinking he could find another Tenochtitlan to make a greater fortune, but it never happened. After more incidents of insubordination he was sent back to Spain – this time for good – in his own words, 'old, poor and in debt'.

Cortés's enthusiasm, passion for glory and aspiration to shake off the shackles of mainstream society and get rich was an inspiration to his troops and the people he convinced to support his expeditions. To the native people of America he was fearsome, ruthless and akin to a devil in their mythology; he brought death and destruction wherever he went. To Cortés himself, he was a man who could always do better, get richer and live more grandly. By the time of his death in 1547 his grand designs were left unfulfilled because he ended up where he had started – in the provinces of Spain, living the life of an obscure rural lord.

Defining moment

Cortés discovers Tenochtitlan
1519

Cortés and his small band of conquistadors discover the city at the heart of the Aztec Empire, Tenochtitlan. They are struck by what they see; a city built upon lakes with grand boulevards, huge temples and large open markets all made of stone. They are treated as gods and, seizing this opportunity, Cortés quickly takes as much gold as he can find in the city. He then captures the Aztec ruler Montezuma and forces him to act as a vassal for the Spanish state.

Defining moment

Tenochtitlan destroyed
1521

After months of siege warfare the city of Tenochtitlan is destroyed and eventually remains at only a quarter of its original size. When Cortés finally storms the city, its inhabitants are starving and dying of small pox. Nearly 240,000 Aztecs die in the siege. Cortés renames Tenochtitlan Mexico City and creates the province of New Spain out of what remains of the Aztec territory. The Aztec nation ceases to exist as it once did.



Aztec rebellion
After negotiating with a body of conquistadors sent to arrest him, Cortés returns to Tenochtitlan to find that the Aztecs have rebelled against Montezuma. He is forced to quickly make his escape from the city
1520 June

Devastating disease
The Aztecs of Tenochtitlan start developing small pox and it brutally ravishes the population since they have no resistance to European disease.
1520 July

Tlaxcalan territory
Cortés and his by now dilapidated army reach the Tlaxcalan tribe, which they had befriended months before. Cortés now begins to rebuild his forces in preperation for a final assault on the city of Tenochtitlan.
1520 July

Recalled to Spain
Success in the field creates enemies for Cortés at home and through political intrigue he is ousted from the governorship of New Spain. He is recalled to Spain a little over a year later to answer charges including misconduct and murder.
1528

Baja California
Having successfully defended his position in Spain, Cortés returns to Mexico rejuvenated and commissions an exploration to find a route to the Pacific. However, he actually discovers California instead.
1535

Unfulfilled ambition
Cortés is forced to return to Spain, having lost much of his wealth. He dies there in poverty in 1547, while attempting to get to a ship going back to Mexico.
1547

1547

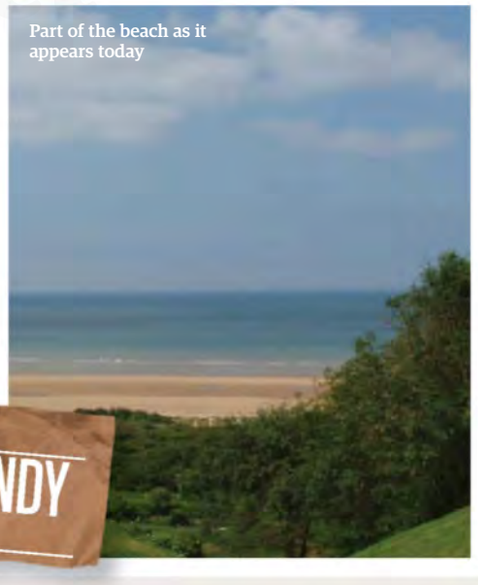
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Tour Guide
Omaha Beach



A primary theatre of operations for the Normandy landings of WWII, this would prove to be one of the decisive Allied victories


Part of the beach as it appears today


The view from within one of the landing craft

01 First wave

The prevailing tides and currents meant that many of the attacking forces were pushed to the left of their intended docking point – which in a number of instances put them directly in the target range of the German defences. In the case of the 1st Battalion, 116th Regiment at Dog Green, this meant they were almost completely wiped out, with the majority of troops at other docking points being held off virtually at the beach line. However, it was also at this point that reinforcements managed to achieve some of the first breakthroughs against the German lines.



02 TANKS ATTACK

Unlike the armoured assault on the eastern flank, in which only 18 out of 48 tanks made it to shore, the landings at Dog Red fared better. Due to the roughness of the sea, the landing forces arrived directly on the beach, with 40 out of 48 vehicles making it to land.

03 Aerial/naval bombardment

Part of the reason for the high number of casualties sustained during the assault was the lack of success of the aircraft bombing assault prior to the landings. Poor visibility due to fog hampered the pilots' ability to attack their targets with any accuracy. As a result the majority of the bombs fell behind enemy lines, with the planes ultimately waiting too long for fear of hitting the Allied forces. Moreover, the naval bombardment lasted only 40 minutes, meaning the majority of the defensive forces were left intact and ready to meet the Allied forces.

04 Turning point

Despite heavy losses early on, the Allied forces slowly began to gain ground. Upon reaching the beaches, the 18th and 115th Regimental Forces proceeded to secure the beachhead and capture key German defensive positions. By 12.25, the East Red beach was secure and further reinforcements could be called on.

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After Omaha

Although the Omaha landings didn't go exactly to plan, with far more casualties being inflicted than expected, it was nonetheless a success for the Allies, who managed to gain a first vital foothold in Europe since the evacuation at Dunkirk in 1940. A portable harbour (known as Mulberry harbour) was towed to Omaha after being constructed offshore, although this was wrecked several days later in a storm, leading to supplies being dropped directly on the beach. Today, evidence of the D-Day landings still exists in the form of the jagged remnants of the harbour, as well as numerous craters from shell explosions and various abandoned bunkers and turrets. Debris was still being found as recently as the Eighties and there have been numerous monuments established in the areas on and around the beach. As well as Les Braves monument, there's also the Omaha Beach Memorial Museum at Saint Laurent-sur-Mer, the Omaha D-Day Museum at Vierville-sur-Mer and The Rangers Museum at Grandcamp Maisy.

10 RONALD REAGAN SPEECH

A heavily fortified observation point for the German defences, this was nonetheless captured by Allied forces with relatively few casualties. It was also the site of Ronald Reagan's much-vaunted speech on 6 June 1984 in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the landings.



09 German defences

The German defences at Omaha beach were well organised and in greater numbers than the Allied commanders expected. There was a network of bunkers and trenches fortifying certain positions with guns, with one such network being located at Vierville-sur-Mer. The personnel station there had been reinforced by members of the 352nd Infantry Division and the geography of the area itself provided the defending forces with a tactical advantage. The cliffs enabled the construction of angled bunkers dug into the side of the cliff faces that gave a wider target range.

08 Beach disaster zone

With the German defences functioning in such a ruthlessly efficient manner, the beach areas became quickly clogged up with wreckage, making landing difficult for the Allied forces. This became a particular problem at Les Moulins, where the functioning artillery quickly turned the beach into a wreckage-strewn nightmare.



The German defences made light work of Allied armour



07 Les Braves monument built

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Normandy landings, on 5 June 2004 the Les Braves monument was officially opened. It is located in the village of St. Laurent-sur-Mer – at the boundary of the Dog and Easy sectors – and was designed by French artist and sculptor Anilore Banon.



Omaha saw some of the bloodiest fighting

05 Attacking disaster

Of all the losses suffered by the Allies, a particular low point was when the 16th Regiment incurred an especially high casualty rate, with the majority of the German guns having survived the prior bombardments.

06 AMERICAN CEMETERY

9,387 servicemen are buried here at the American cemetery in Coleville-sur-Mer, which is located towards the east end of Omaha beach.



The Les Braves monument was unveiled in 2004

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An IRA suspect is apprehended by a British soldier during Bloody Sunday in Derry, Northern Ireland on 30 January 1972

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Eye Witness

BLOODY SUNDAY, DERRY, NORTHERN IRELAND, 30 JANUARY 1972

Written by Chris Fenton

SIMON WINCHESTER OBE



Simon Winchester is a renowned journalist and writer who has covered news stories and global events throughout the world. Educated at Oxford he initially worked for the Canadian mining company, Falconbridge of Africa, before he got a job as a journalist on *The Journal* in Newcastle Upon Tyne. In 1969 he joined *The Guardian* and covered numerous world events including the creation of Bangladesh and the Watergate scandal in Washington DC.

> “Once I realised later in the evening how many people had been killed then the questions started... why would they do such a thing?”

It was a cold, frosty morning on Sunday 30 January 1972. Simon Winchester, reporting for *The Guardian* on the troubles in Northern Ireland for nearly two years, was driving to Derry from Belfast to cover the demonstration on civil rights in the city. It was expected to be a dramatic day. He'd already phoned *The Guardian* Newsdesk in Manchester to be prepared for a page-one story. “I arrived very early that morning, checked into the city hotel and went straight down into the Bogside,” explains Winchester. The city hotel was also where Ivan Cooper, the protestant civil rights organiser who was managing the demonstration, had hastily changed the route of the march to avoid a confrontation with the British Army.

The march would now be heading to Free Derry Corner in the catholic Bogside area of the city, not the Guildhall within the city walls. The British Army was everywhere in the city and had barricaded all the entrances to the city centre along the city walls to prevent the marchers from getting to the Guildhall. There had been a particularly nasty incident between civil rights protestors and the British Army the week before, prompting the change of plans from the march organisers. The discovery of an internment camp at Magilligan on Lough Foyle shore, for mostly catholic prisoners who hadn't been given trials, ended in violence when British troops from the Parachute Regiment dispersed the protestors on the beach with batons and rubber bullets, causing severe injuries. “The whole affair of the week before created a testy and pretty hostile atmosphere within the city. In other words it wasn't all sweetness and light, particularly in the Bogside,” Winchester recalls. The British Army was also tense, having been subjected to verbal abuse, stone-throwing, rioting and causalities throughout Ulster: “Within the wall, the military was in a no-nonsense kind of mood.”

Winchester quickly found the marchers on the Creggan Estate and followed them as they made their way towards William Street and the junction to Free Derry Corner. The marchers were following a coal lorry where influential civil rights speakers and MPs were encouraging the crowd. Much of the crowd were dressed in their sunday best, having just come out of services from the local church. Winchester decided that he would try to fall out of the crowd and get a better perspective from the barricades: “I followed the march for quite a while, then, like all reporters, you dodge about and I then tried to get through one of the barricades. They [the British Army] told me I was to stay put, they were pretty unpleasant about.” In a later report to *The Guardian*, Winchester noted that they told him to ‘stay and take what's coming to you’. As he made his way back towards the Bogsiders and the marchers he noticed that “a pretty hostile mood was developing”.

Marchers reached the William Street/Rossville Street junction at around 3.35pm. At the bottom of Rossville Street lay Free Derry Corner and the catholic heart of Derry; the official end point of the march. Just past the junction, on William Street, was Barrier 14, with the British Army preventing the march continuing on to

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The Bloody Sunday massacre

CST

- **07-00am** — **British Army units set up barricades around the centre of Derry**
- **10-00am** — **March organisers announce a change in the route of the march to Free Derry Corner**
- **02-45pm** — **Marchers begin to gather on Bishop's Field in the Creggan area of the city**
- **03-00pm** — **The march into the Derry** Marchers set off in the direction of the Guildhall to William Street
- **03-15pm** — **Marchers enter William Street and head towards Rossville Street and Barrier 14**
- **03-35pm** — **The march splits up** Marchers reach the Rossville Street junction. Stewards try to stop them reaching the Guildhall
- **03-37pm** — **Marchers funnel into Rossville Street but a large element confronts the Royal Green Jackets at Barrier 14**
- **03-40pm** — **The crowd is told to disperse** Inspector Jankin of the Royal Ulster Constabulary announces that the march is illegal
- **03-45pm** — **Water cannon is used on the crowd at Barrier 14, but rioting continues in that area**
- **03-55pm** — **The scooper operation** Colonel Derek Wilford requests a green light for an arrest operation. He is told to wait
- **03-55pm** — **Wilford reports his soldiers have opened fire, hitting two marchers in William Street**
- **04-05pm** — **Neptune at discretion** Water cannon is used again to try to disperse the enraged rioters
- **04-07pm** — **Brigadier MacLellan, head of the Derry operation, orders the Paras not to advance down Rossville Street**
- **04-07pm** — **Failure to follow orders** Wilford deploys one company through Barrier 14 and deploys a support company in APCs onto Rossville Street
- **04-10pm** — **General panic ensues down Rossville street as rioters run into peaceful marchers**
- **04-10pm** — **Paras open fire** Paras open fire after suspected gunfire is heard. This goes on for nearly 30 minutes
- **04-40pm** — **A ceasefire is ordered. No casualties are sustained by the Paras and no weapons are found. 13 residents lie dead**

the city centre. The lorry directing the marchers turned right down Rossville Street but many carried on towards Barrier 14 and started to confront the soldiers guarding the barricade. Winchester headed away from the riot that was now developing on William Street and walked down towards the speakers at the bottom of Rossville Street.

Unknown to the marchers or Winchester, who was now caught between the civil rights speeches going on in Rossville Street and the riot breaking out in William Street, the Army had put a plan together to 'scoop up' the rioters at Barrier 14. The Parachute Regiment was to move in and conduct an arrest operation if there was a clear separation between marchers and rioters. This was not uncommon, as Winchester points out: "There was separation between the riot going on in William Street and the peaceful protest going on in Rossville Street... I had been to many demonstrations beforehand and there were snatch squads – very fit young soldiers would run in and try to collar the miscreants, or hit them with batons, or else they would fire tear gas... I wasn't expecting the Army to do anything more than this, however." The arrest operation had strict instructions from the operation commander, Brigadier Patrick MacLellan; they were to go through Barrier 14, but to stay in William Street and not to 'conduct a running battle down Rossville Street'.

A suspected miscommunication of orders from British Army HQ to 1 Para meant that instead of following MacLellan's instruction, Derek Wilford, commander of 1 Para, threw armoured vehicles through Barrier 12 and soldiers on foot through Barrier 14, straight into retreating crowds pouring into Rossville Street. The Saville Report later found that Wilford disobeyed orders in leading troops and armoured vehicles into Rossville Street. People were shocked and started to panic. Winchester and the crowd immediately started to run back and he recalls that "at this point I think the crowd was incredulous." It was highly unusual for the Army to come so far into the Bogside, much less start to take up firing positions. When shots rang out from the soldiers, screams from the marchers near the lorry pierced the air and everyone ducked. "I think most people, including myself, were shocked. It was quite extraordinary that they were behaving the way that they were". Winchester immediately ran for cover. "I saw a soldier pointing his rifle towards me, I saw him, moved and then there were flakes of stone coming off the wall behind me... I was wearing a sort of barber jacket and karki trousers which could of looked vaguely military I suppose."

Between the barrage of gunfire, Winchester ran into the urban maze that was the Bogside. "I ran towards the [city] wall and took shelter in a church with other people sheltering there." The paratroopers were taking aimed shots at the crowd that was now trying to find cover behind rubble scattered around Rossville Street. As Winchester started out again following the city walls, trying to dodge the Army barricades, he saw something unusual: "A civilian with a rifle coming from the city walls from the Loyalist side of town. I made a note of it, but I didn't put much emphasis on it – it was a very confusing time." Whether he was a loyalist or republican, Winchester never found out, but the whole of the



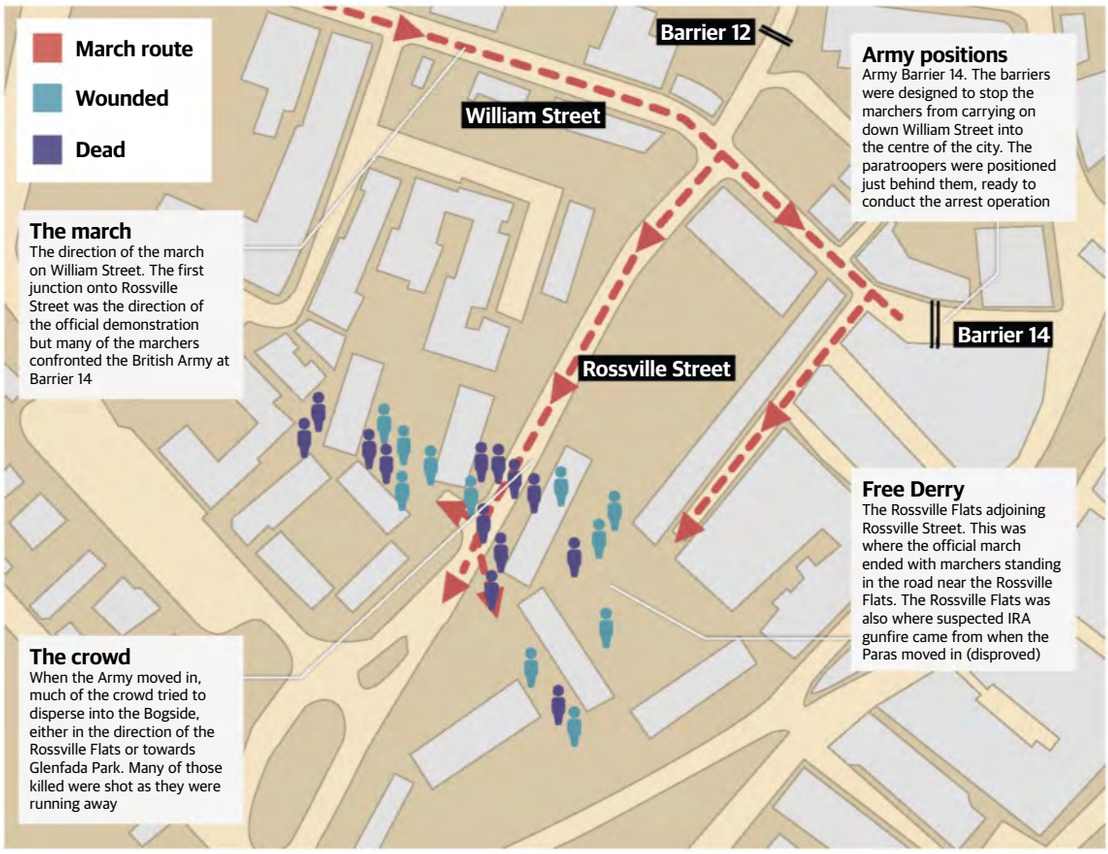
A British soldier covers his fellow soldiers while they investigate a burning building



Marchers confront the British Army behind one of the makeshift barriers, throwing various missiles

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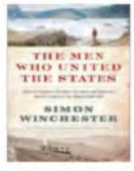


"When shots rang out from the soldiers, screams from the marchers near the lorry pierced the air and everyone ducked"

Bogside was now resembling a war zone. He managed to work his away through the streets and passed the old walls as the gunshots rang out from Rossville Street. He finally made it past the city walls and back to the comparative safety of his hotel: "I wasn't allowed to talk to any of the squaddies after the shooting, but the official explanation said things we knew not to be true – the crucial point to all of this was how much fire they [the British Army] were taking from the crowd." The Army justified the shootings in Rossville Street by the 'Yellow Card' system, soldiers returning fire having been fired upon. Despite the presence of IRA gunman in the area, and one round being fired at paratroopers in William Street after soldiers shot two marchers before they went into Rossville Street, the Saville Report concluded that the killings in Rossville Street and the surrounding area were unjustified.

Winchester was able to talk to the march organisers before he made his final report to *The Guardian* Newsdesk. "They were all horrified, puzzled, shocked, dismayed and distressed that such a thing would happen. They expected bloody noses, they expected tear gas, they expected a few broken bones but to think that people would actually be killed by high-power rifles – well it changed everything. Up until that point there had been a lot of bombing mayhem, agro of one sort of another – suddenly it had entered a new dimension." He phoned the hospital to find out how many people were injured and was told that 13 civilians were dead. "Once I realised how many people had been killed the questions started; why would they do such a thing?"

As the Sun set on Derry, Winchester took in the scene: "The Moon was rising. It was clear, frosty... and the city was aghast at what had happened. It was the numbers. I remember standing in that telephone box talking to the secretary at the hospital as he was saying: 'We've got 13 bodies here'. I know 13 doesn't sound a lot, but back than 13 people being shot dead by the British Army in an Anglo-Irish city – it was unthinkable".



Simon Winchester's latest book, *The Men Who United the States* is released on 11 November in the UK, published by Harper Collins. It's available now for pre-order at www.amazon.com

Have you witnessed a landmark event in history?
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Origins and aftermath

Bloody Sunday was a horrifying incident that occurred within the collective period known as The Troubles in Northern Ireland – a struggle between catholic and protestant paramilitary organisations in the province from the mid-Sixties to 1998. It also represents the conflict between the republican IRA, who loosely supported the catholic communities, to end British rule for good in Ireland and the British Army ostensibly sent by the British government to keep the peace. The conflict originated from the separation of catholic-dominated southern Ireland, which became independent from Britain in 1948, and protestant-controlled Ulster, which wanted to remain part of the United Kingdom. There was still a catholic minority living in Northern Ireland and the protestant-dominated Stormont government controlling the province feared they might try to take control and unite Ireland under republican rule from Dublin. An oppressive series of restrictions were introduced by Stormont, preventing catholics from getting certain jobs, being allocated proper social housing and voting in fair elections. Stormont also established an all-protestant police force which, under special powers, could arrest and imprison anyone they wanted without trial. In the weeks leading up to Bloody Sunday, the British Army had begun heavy-handed arrests of suspected IRA members, destroying any trust the catholic community had for the Army, and had intensified the internment without trial policy. In the aftermath of Bloody Sunday, the IRA would step up its campaign of targeting British Army positions around the province and the catholics and protestants would became even more polarised, facilitating more violence.



Lord Mountbatten, along with three other people, was assassinated by the Provisional IRA, in 1979

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What if... The Gunpowder Plot had succeeded?

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, ENGLAND, 1605

Written by Ben Biggs

SINEAD FITZGIBBON



Sinead Fitzgibbon is an Irish author and writer whose published history books include *A Short History Of London, The Queen* and *The Gunpowder Plot: History In An Hour*. She graduated from university with a degree in economics, working in investment banking in Sydney, Australia for six years before returning to the UK to pursue a career as a writer in 2007. She has a particular interest in art, literature and of course, history.

What if the Gunpowder Plot had been successful?
Had the plot been successful the country's first major colonisation of the New World – the establishment of Jamestown in Virginia in 1607 – may never have happened. Perhaps the French or Spanish would have gotten there first. And had England failed to settle America, would we have then been in a position to colonise the West Indies? Without the profits generated from this colony, Britain might not have had the financial means to expand its horizons in the 19th century. Had the British not settled America in the 17th century, would English be the global language it is today? Probably not. Perhaps we would now live in a world where French is the language of Hollywood and we in Britain would be the ones straining to read the subtitles on the big screen.

How close were Catesby and his co-conspirators to succeeding?
Given the fact that Guy Fawkes, along with his hoard of gunpowder, was discovered by the King's men just a few hours before the fuse was due to be lit, some might say that the plot came very close to succeeding. Further investigation, however, reveals a very different story. Before its dramatic conclusion in the early hours of 5 November 1605, the Gunpowder Plot had been in the planning stages for over 18 months. During this unusually long gestation period, the original five conspirators found it increasingly difficult to deflect suspicion and keep their scheme under wraps. As time went on, necessity forced them to reveal their plans to various friends and family members. On 26 October 1605, an anonymous letter was sent to one Lord Monteagle warning him not to attend the upcoming opening of Parliament as 'they shall receive a terrible blow this Parliament and yet they shall not see who hurts them.' Monteagle raised the alarm and the King was informed. The Gunpowder Plot was, thanks to this letter, discovered a full nine days previously.

What would blowing up the Houses of Parliament have done to the political landscape of the day?
Had the powder combusted properly and wiped out prominent members of the royal family and the country's political elite as planned, I doubt the country's political landscape would have greatly changed in the long term. Indeed, the fact that Catesby believed otherwise was naïve in the extreme. Common sense dictates that the powerful Protestant ruling families would surely have hunted down the perpetrators, while Protestant vigilantes, galvanised by the act of terror inflicted on their fellow men in Westminster, would have sought revenge against ordinary Catholic civilians. If anything, a successful Gunpowder Plot would have made life worse for English Catholics, not better.

How do you think British Catholics would have reacted to the untimely death of the Protestant James I?
The majority of 17th century Catholics would have viewed Catesby's actions in the same way Northern Irish Catholics reacted to the murderous campaigns of the IRA during the Troubles – that is, with abhorrence. Also, it's worth pointing out that James was not uniformly despised by the Catholic community; many still held out hope that he would be persuaded to lessen the restrictions placed on the Roman religion by his predecessors. After all, his mother was the Catholic martyr, Mary Queen of Scots. Protestants would have been outraged by the regicide, and I believe many would have taken the law into their own hands in an attempt to exact revenge. It's not difficult to envisage an eruption of anti-Catholic riots throughout the country.

How do you think the assassination of James I would have affected Britain's relationship with other countries?
By the 17th century, relations between Protestant Britain and Catholic Spain had been strained for decades. Tensions had begun to escalate during the initial stages of the Reformation when Henry VIII divorced Catherine of Aragon [daughter of Spain's Ferdinand and Isabella], and had peaked with the failed invasion by the Spanish Armada in 1588. Even after 1588, some English Catholics continued to hope that the Spanish would one day succeed in overthrowing the country's Protestant rulers. This intervention never materialised, thanks in large part to the strain imposed on Spain's military resources by the Dutch wars.

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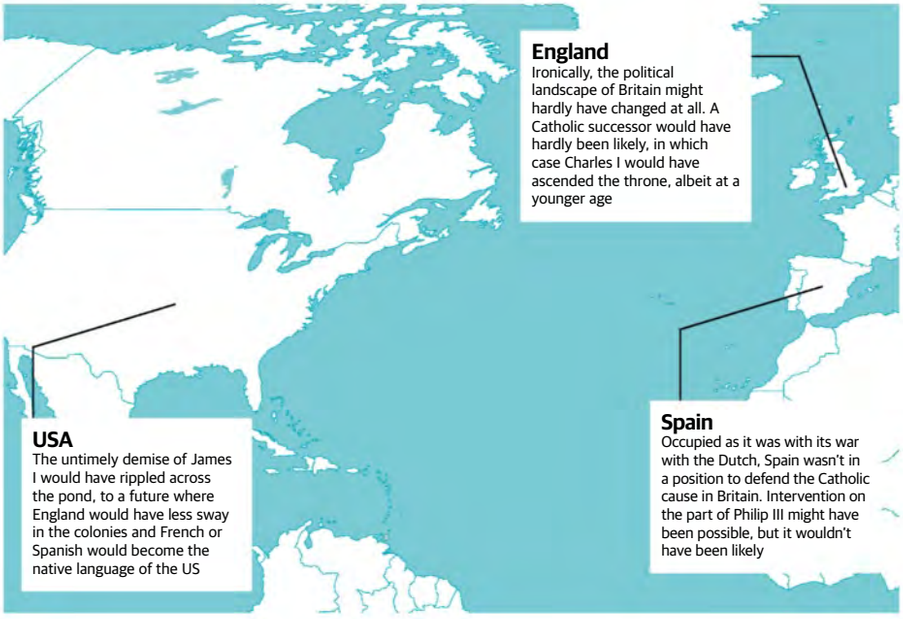
“Would English be the global language it is today? Probably not. Perhaps we would now live in a world where French is the language of Hollywood”



It is possible that the Gunpowder Plot's modern day ramifications would have included a shift in power in favour of countries like France or Spain

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT HAD SUCCEEDED?

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It's difficult to say how Spain would have reacted had Catesby's scheme borne fruit. Perhaps it would have tipped the balance in favour of the longed-for Spanish intervention. Maybe Philip III would have sought to capitalise on the plotters' triumph by attempting to install himself or a member of his family on the English throne – after all, his sister, Isabella, had once been touted by some prominent English Catholics as a possible successor to Elizabeth I. But while this scenario was possible, I don't believe it was very probable. By this point in the proceedings, Spain had largely abandoned English Catholics to their fate – indeed, the court of Philip III had previously declined to offer Catesby any assistance in his quest to mount a rebellion.

More broadly, I think the Gunpowder Plot would have had a significant impact on Britain's relations with the wider world, in that Catesby's scheme may well have put paid to the country's early colonial ambitions.

James I was a Scottish King – if the assassination had succeeded how would Scotland have reacted?

This is an interesting point to consider. James had been Scotland's monarch for 35 years before succeeding Elizabeth I to the throne in 1603. And given that Scottish Calvinists had gone to great lengths to install James as king in the first place, I doubt they would have taken his assassination lightly. A Scottish invasion of England may well have been the result.

Who would have been the most likely successor to James I if a Catholic monarch was placed on the throne?

In a bid to add legitimacy to his coup, it was Catesby's intention to install James and Anne's nine-year-old daughter, Princess Elizabeth, on the throne as a puppet monarch. Catholic guardians would have been appointed to oversee her re-education in the Roman faith, while a regent would look after affairs of state until she came of age. She would then have been married off to a Catholic prince from one of Europe's royal dynasties, re-establishing a Catholic line of succession. Again, this was a very ill-conceived plan, as it was unlikely Elizabeth would have been as pliable and cooperative as Catesby hoped.

What if James I had died but the Protestants retained control – who would have been crowned then?

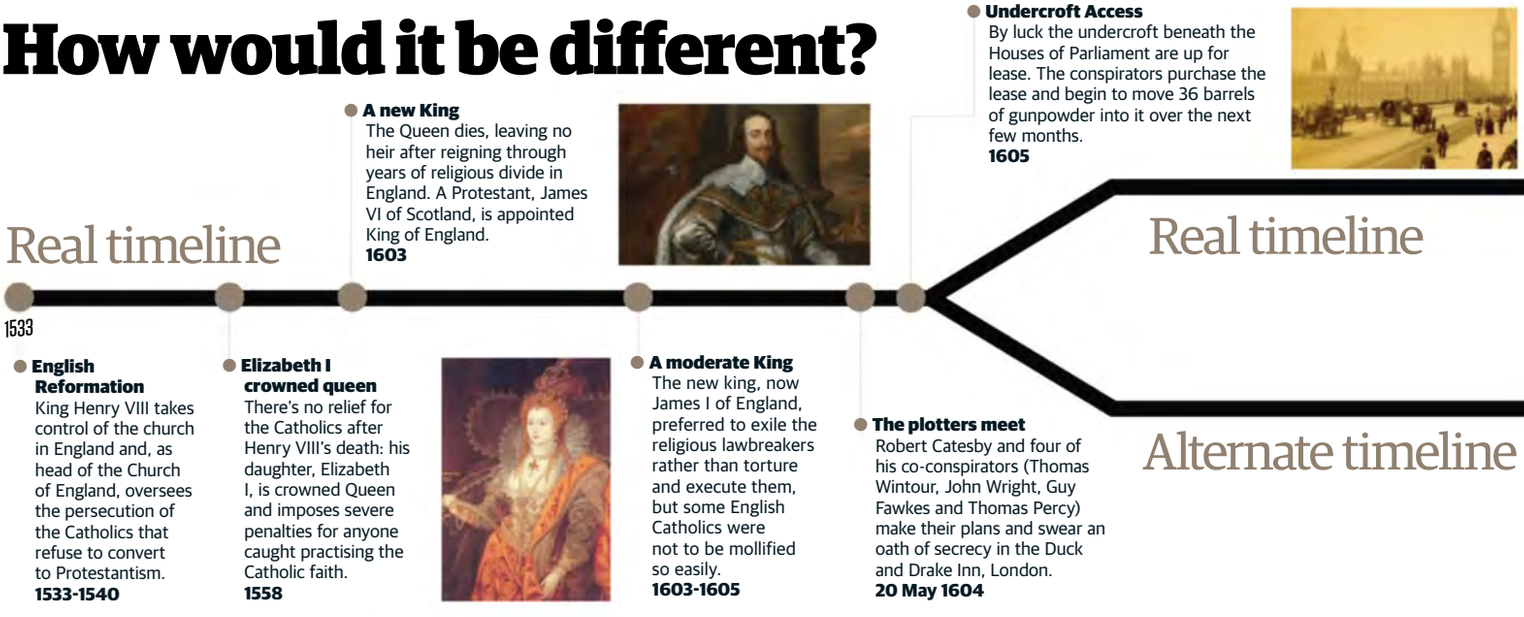
James's eldest son, Henry, was due to attend the opening of Parliament along with his parents on the fateful day. Assuming he too had been killed, the next in line to the throne was the youngest son, Charles [Elizabeth would have been precluded from the line of succession thanks to the laws of male primogeniture]. Just as Catesby had planned with Elizabeth, the Protestant establishment would have looked after the boy's, and indeed the country's interests until he reached the age where he could rule in his own right.

What effect would either outcome have had on the future lineage of Britain?

In the case of Charles, there would have been no impact on the future line of succession, as he was destined to take the throne anyway. In 1612, he became heir apparent when his older brother, Prince Henry, died of suspected typhoid fever [Charles eventually succeeded his father to the throne on the latter's death in 1625].

It is less clear what would have happened to the line of succession had Catesby succeeded in his plan to install Princess

How would it be different?



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Macbeth was thought to have been inspired by the Gunpowder Plot, and so may never have seen the light of day had it been a success

Elizabeth as monarch. Would Charles have tried to oust his sister once he came of age? Possibly. Perhaps Elizabeth would have willingly abdicated in favour of her brother, given he was the rightful heir. We shall never know. Elizabeth was, however, to leave her mark on England's royal lineage. When the House of Stuart eventually gave way to the House of Hanover [childlessness having done what a revolution, a beheading, and an abdication had failed to do], it was Anne's grandson, George I, who became the first Hanoverian king. There's a pleasing synchronicity in that, wouldn't you say?

Besides James I, there were some notable historic figures present in the house on the day. What would the knock-on effect of these collateral deaths have had on the history books?

Had the architects of the Gunpowder Plot achieved their aims, the untimely death of Francis Bacon would have been a significant loss to posterity. A polymath who wrote prolifically, his works greatly influenced the development of philosophical, scientific, and legal thinking. The biggest loser, however, would have been our English language. Both James VI and

"A Scottish invasion of England may well have been the result"

Bishop Bancroft had a part to play in the compilation of the King James Version of the Bible (KJV), which was destined to form part of the bedrock on which our modern language is built. Although work had started on the KJV in 1604, it wasn't finished until 1611, and you could argue that the project might never have reached completion had these two men perished in November 1605. The other great contributor to our language was, of course, William Shakespeare. It is sobering to consider that, without the patronage of King James [who funded Shakespeare's acting company, The King's Men], some of the greatest works of dramatic tragedy may never have been written. Certainly *Macbeth*, written in 1606 and widely thought to have been inspired by the Gunpowder Plot, may never have seen the light of day – because, as the contemporary writer Sir John Harington famously said, "Treason doth never prosper. What's the reason? Why, if it prosper, none dare call it treason."

What would Britain have been like today, politically and religiously?

When all is said and done, I don't believe Protestantism would have been supplanted had the Houses of Parliament gone up in flames on that November day in 1605. I think the country's Protestant majority would have scuppered Catesby's plans, and Charles would have succeeded his father to the English and Scottish thrones. Puritanism may have flourished as a reaction to the atrocity, and perhaps Oliver Cromwell would never have had his day in the sun. From a global perspective, the picture may well have been very different. Had the political upheaval resulting from a successful Gunpowder Plot diverted attentions away from colonial expansion, the British Empire may never have got off the ground. It is entirely feasible to suggest that country might never have become a major player on the world stage; instead it may have been destined to play second fiddle in a French or Spanish speaking world. In short, Great Britain might never have achieved the requisite degree of greatness to justify its lofty name.

Have your say

Do you agree with our expert's view?

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Anonymous tip-off
Lord Monteagle receives an anonymous letter begging him not to go to the opening of Parliament on that fateful day. It proves to be key evidence in revealing the plot to the King.
26 October 1605

The discovery
With knowledge of the plot, the undercroft is searched the evening before Parliament's opening. Guy Fawkes is discovered hiding there with 36 barrels of gunpowder, ready to light the fuse.
4 November 1605

Capture and arrest
Over the next few days, the plotters are rounded up, arrested and interrogated. Following trial, they're hung, drawn and quartered – a particularly horrific form of execution reserved for traitors.
8 November 1605

Declaration of Independence
Britain's hold on the American colonies reaches breaking point as an agreement is signed and a union is formed under one proposed nation: the Unites States of America.
1776



Jamestown settled
The Virginia company of London reaches the east coast of America, where a permanent settlement is established – Jamestown – that lasts as the colony's capital for nearly a century.
14 May 1607

USA
After a century of war, the fledgling nation expands and prospers to the world power it is today. Britain's own fortunes wane as its empire diminishes, but English is an international language.
1776-present day

Anonymous tip-off
Lord Monteagle receives an anonymous letter, but decides to keep its contents to himself. He makes his excuses to avoid Parliament on its fateful opening day.
26 October 1605

Parliament destroyed
Amid the opening of the Houses of Parliament, there is a huge explosion from the undercroft beneath it. King James I as well as a host of dignitaries are killed.
5 November 1605

English uprising
Inspired by the plotters, Catholics in many quarters rebel against the Protestants and, despite Charles I taking the throne, Britain is caught up in religious conflict.
1605-1606

America colonised
The first major colonies of America are established by the French and Spanish. The War for Independence is fought between the colonists and the old-world countries.
1607-1766

The world stage
Britain never becomes a superpower as it isn't involved in the land-grab of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. French and Spanish are the dominant languages of modern day USA.
1766-Present day

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50 YEARS ON

JFK LIFE & LEGACY

50 years after his death, John F Kennedy still inspires and fascinates the world

Written by Chris Fenton

Election night, Tuesday 8 November 1960. John 'Jack' Fitzgerald Kennedy waited for the voting results to come through on the television, his family sat around him in the living room of his brother's home in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts. The endless television interviews, broadcast debates, rallies and travelling had taken their toll on his health, he hadn't had a proper meal or a good night's sleep in two weeks, and now he was beyond exhausted. The endless lectures from his father, Joe, about image and how it didn't matter who you were, only what people thought you were, had started to grate on him. Even his wife Jackie, normally a source of comfort, was starting to unsettle him - when more favourable results came in and she said, "Oh bunny, you're president now!" he quickly turned his head away from the television screen and looked at her with his tired eyes, replying "No... no, it's too early yet".

After winning the industrial cities of the Northeast, doubt filled the cramped living room when the loss of the Midwest and the Rocky Mountain states came through on the broadcast. His opponent, Richard Nixon, was more experienced, had more supporters in the all-important south, and had been endorsed by the current president, war hero Dwight Eisenhower. He was the safe vote, while Kennedy was the young, energetic pretender. Kennedy could only hope and pray that he had done enough.

After the "longest night in history," as Jackie would later describe it, the call came in the following morning. Nixon had admitted defeat and sent a congratulatory telegram to Kennedy. It was one of the closet elections in American history; the final tally being 34,227,096 to 34,107,646 of the popular vote, with 303 to 219 of the electoral vote going to the young pretender. The bare facts say it was hardly a ringing endorsement of Kennedy, but given the experience and relative popularity of Nixon, it was a spectacular victory. Against the advice of his closet supporters, Kennedy visited Nixon in Florida on 14 November. Kennedy wasn't impressed. He silently listened to Nixon dominate what was meant to be a friendly conversation about the last few months, and wondered how a man like this had nearly won the presidency. As he clambered back onto his helicopter after it was

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JOHN F KENNEDY

American , 1917-1963

Brief Bio

John 'Jack' F Kennedy was born into a rich Irish-American Catholic family from Brookline, Massachusetts. He served in the Navy during World War II, commanding a patrol boat in the Pacific that was destroyed by enemy fire. He married Jackie Bouvier, a rich and well-established Catholic socialite in 1953, and ascended to the presidency in 1961. He would only serve two years of his term before he was assassinated in 1963.



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over, he turned to an aide and said, "It was just as well for all of us he didn't quite make it!"

Kennedy's presidency would go down in history as the dawn of a new era. He changed the face of politics by courting the media and creating his very own cult of celebrity, inspiring hope through his charm and freedom through his liberal policies. He gave the US a renewed self-confidence through his tough reputation abroad, and after his brutal assassination in Dallas his legacy would live on.

At the start of Kennedy's long fight for Democratic nomination in 1957, a reporter said that Kennedy was Washington's 'hottest tourist attraction'. It was widely rumoured he had an 'in' in *Life* magazine because of all the positive press he received there, and the *American Mercury* hailed him as the "perfect politician". Others were less convinced. "He'll never make it with that haircut," commented a prominent politician from New York.

It was true that Kennedy had his critics, but it was his deep connection with the media, getting his name in the public domain and making sure that through his family connections it stayed out there in the best possible light, that made his political campaigns in the Fifties a success. The media was enamoured with his good looks, beautiful wife and young family. He represented the American dream, descended from Irish immigrants and doing well through America's bounty to become a senator in the most powerful country in the world. He was the equivalent of an A-list celebrity on Capitol Hill, and he didn't mind the status, as he himself remarked, "This publicity does one good thing: it takes the Vice out of Vice-President." This wasn't to say that he was a shallow man who simply enjoyed the press for his own vanity; the press shots of him and Jackie with their children in Hyannis Port may have been doctored to fit the idyll of the perfect American family, but they do portray a genuine sentiment of love.

One of the most compelling stories that illustrates his character was not caught on camera, however. During his tenure in office, an aide was showing a group of disabled children around the White House when their wheelchairs prevented them from joining the rest of the tour group. Kennedy, late for a meeting, spotted them and came over to the children. The aide recalled: "He crossed the lawn to us, insisted on being introduced to each child and either picked up each limp, paralysed hand to shake it, or touched the child on the cheek. He had a different conversation with each child... the child's face radiated a joy totally impossible to describe." Kennedy's natural charm was rooted in compassion – something that the press could project, but not create.

The power over the press he possessed even allowed him to overcome the prejudices sections of American society held due to his Catholic upbringing; one writer remarked, "The stereotype of the Irish Catholic politician, the pugnacious, priest-ridden representative of an embittered, embattled minority, simply does not fit the poised, urbane, cosmopolitan young socialite from Harvard." This was put to the test when he was nominated as the Democratic candidate for the presidency. He knew he would need something more than his easy smile, good looks and friends in the print media, as these alone would not be enough against a seasoned politician like Nixon; he would need something that would allow him to reach millions and captivate them with his personality. He needed the power of television.

Kennedy's time would come during the first live television debates in September 1960, a contest

ONE OF MY SONS WILL BE PRESIDENT



Joe Kennedy famously made the above claim about his sons. He was a man who expected a lot from his family – after all, they were Kennedys, and thus destined for greatness. Born in 1888, Joe grew up in a well-established Catholic family from Boston. He worked in Hollywood as a film producer and then entered politics as part of the Franklin Roosevelt administration. He later became ambassador to Britain, famously saying the country was "finished" in 1940. He was renowned for his political connections, using them to see his children established among the elite of American society after the war. It was also rumoured that he had unofficial connections with the Mafia, using them as he used everyone else: to get more power and influence. He was a domineering and harsh father, especially when his family didn't meet his high standards, and infamously had his daughter Rosemary lobotomised because of her violent personality. He also 'vetted' husbands for his daughters, ensuring they all married into families that would benefit the family. His affairs with other women were legendary, estranging him from his wife, Rose. He was a pessimist and isolationist, weighed down with old prejudices of the Protestant-dominated middle class. Jack was none of these things, outgrowing Joe's outdated beliefs.

"Not everyone was convinced by Kenendy. 'He'll never make it with that haircut,' commented a prominent politician from New York"



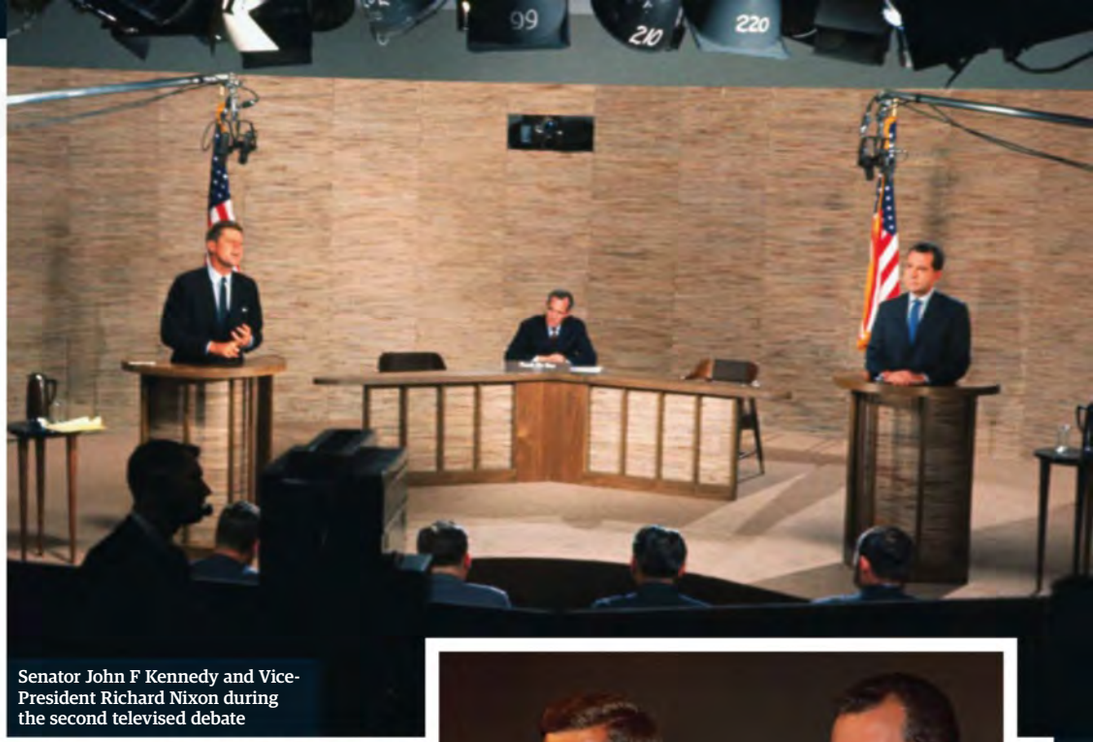
JFK: President, statesman and American hero





that was watched by over 60 million people. Kennedy had taken a tour of the television studio beforehand, where his aides had worked out how the lighting, sound and shooting angles would benefit him; everything would have to be perfect if he was to shine on the box. Both candidates were offered the services of a CBS make-up artist – not that Kennedy needed it, as his skin looked tanned and healthy after campaigning in California. Nixon, on the other hand, looked pasty and sweaty, having only just recovered from a knee injury, but declined the make-up services. Ultimately, he got one of his aides to apply some make-up on minutes before the broadcast to cover up his stubble, but coupled with his pale complexion, it only made him look ill and dirty. Kennedy received coaching from consultants to allow him to practice rebuking Nixon's comment while maintaining eye contact with the audience straight down the lens.

Nixon was confident he could wing it, with one commentator noting afterwards that, "Nixon was addressing himself to Kennedy – but Kennedy was addressing himself to the audience that was the nation." Kennedy chose a suit that contrasted well with the background of the set, while Nixon's blended horribly into the backdrop. Kennedy was prepared and ready; Nixon looked nervous and tired. The result was a popular victory for Kennedy, with one newspaper editor commenting, "The [television] medium is good to Kennedy and most unkind to Nixon. It makes Kennedy look forceful. It makes Nixon look guilty." Emphasising the differences in perception television offered, the majority of those who heard the radio debate thought Nixon had won, while those who watched on television were inclined in favour of Kennedy.



Senator John F Kennedy and Vice-President Richard Nixon during the second televised debate



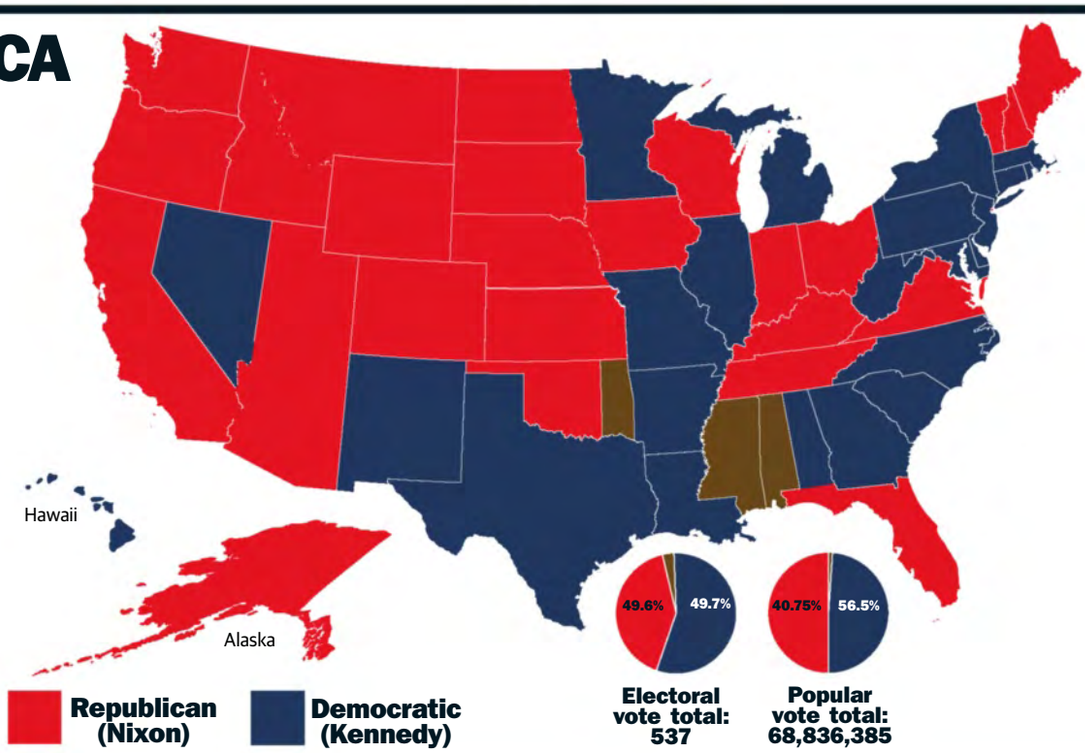
Spectators line the streets of Ireland to catch a glimpse of Kennedy



Presidential nominees Kennedy and Nixon smiling for the cameras prior to their first televised debate

HOW AMERICA WAS WON

The presidential election of 1960 was one of the closest in American history. Richard Nixon, Kennedy's opponent, was able to gain significant control over the American Midwest, a traditional Republican stronghold, and in California and Florida, which carried with it a large number of votes in the electoral college. Kennedy, however, seized control of Texas, a state with a large number of voters, through his running mate Lyndon B Johnson and the industrial heartland of America in the Northeast with the help of his father through his political connections with influential industrialists. One of the major battlegrounds was Chicago, Illinois, which held a large amount of supporters for both Kennedy and Nixon. Controversies would emerge later about Democratic mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, rigging the Illinois vote for Kennedy after a conversation he had with Joe Kennedy and, apparently, the Chicago outfit. In the end, Illinois was won by a paper-thin margin of 8,858 votes.



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50 YEARS ON

Kennedy was the first presidential candidate to properly utilise the power of the media and the idea of looking 'right' to connect with audiences through the medium of television, and it paid out in dividends. Subsequent presidents and their PR teams would never forget it. To this day, the presidential debates are given the highest priority, with PR consultants spending hours coaching and teaching respective nominees when to smile, when to laugh and how to look, even down to the shoes and ties they're wearing. It was Kennedy's stunning victory and his associations with the press before and after the 1960 election that subsequent presidential campaigns modelled themselves on. The image of the man who would lead the American people was now just as important as the man's politics. But of course, looking right was only part of the story; Kennedy had to have the right policies to fully tap into the pool of voters. As influential columnist William V Shannon wrote, "Month after month, from the glossy pages of *Life* to the multicoloured cover of *Redbook*, Jack and Jackie Kennedy smile out at millions of readers; he with his tousled hair and winning smile, she with her dark eyes and beautiful face... But what has all this to with statesmanship?" Ostensibly, the answer could be found in his hard-nosed Cold War rhetoric, but there was another issue burning through America in the Sixties that Kennedy could not afford to ignore: the fight for civil rights.

By 1960, the civil rights movement under Martin Luther King Jr was worrying the southern states, who were holding firm on segregation and humiliating the political community in America as a whole in the process. How on earth could a country that claimed to be the leader of the free world still instigate a policy that restricted, oppressed and otherwise degraded American citizens based on their skin colour? It was a question that was becoming urgent, with the broadcast media reporting all the sit-ins and protests of black citizens in the deep south to an anxious American public; the very people Kennedy would have to get on his side if he was to take the presidency and keep hold of it.

As the election loomed in the autumn of 1960, Kennedy was still looking weak on the civil rights issue. He was certainly more liberal than his opponent, but he didn't have anything of substance to beat him with. By coincidence, King was arrested on 19 October - a month before the election - while taking part in a sit-in protest. Kennedy pounced on it as an opportunity. He phoned the shaken Mrs King, saying "I want to express to you my concern about your husband. I understand that you are expecting a baby, and I just wanted you to know that I was thinking about you and Dr King." It galvanised black voters, with King's father saying, "He can be my President, Catholic or whatever he is. It took courage to call my daughter-in-law at a time like this. He has the moral courage to stand up for what he knows is right." King himself was unconvinced. Despite these words, he was still not pushing civil rights; he was playing the political



John F Kennedy in uniform, 1942



John and Jackie on their wedding day in 1953



The Kennedy family relax at their home in Hyannis Port



John and his son, John Jr, in the White House.



Kennedy and family pose for the camera



The Kennedy brothers: Jack, Bobby and Ted



Kennedy children visit the Oval Office



JFK (second left) with his parents and siblings at Hyannis Port, 04 September 1931

Watching The America's Cup race





John and Jackie with their children in 1962

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Deep in thought while in transit in the 1960 US Presidential campaign



With Martin Luther King and other delegates from the rally in Washington DC



Over 200,000 protestors marched along the Capitol mall in Washington on 28 August 1963

"He had created an atmosphere where change, when it came, would seem no longer an upheaval"

game. It was just words – words enough to capture the presidency, but words nonetheless.

King would call Kennedy's bluff in August 1963 after Kennedy's inaction, marching on Washington with thousands of supporters. Kennedy begged him not to, fearing the marchers would turn violent. But march they did, black and white, the largest demonstration to ever come to the capital, with King at the front of the huge procession, proudly proclaiming, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal." Kennedy looked on open-mouthed; the rapture of the crowd hanging on King's every word was beyond impressive. He immediately invited King and his inner circle to the White House, offering refreshments and a promise to get things moving where he could on civil rights. It was probably a combination of Kennedy's own moral scruples and King's loud insistence that finally got civil rights on the right path, but inaction would still dog Kennedy's record on the agenda.

To say that Kennedy was a mere political opportunist would be grossly unfair, however. He was a man of principles, and the treatment of black communities in the deep South sickened him. However, it is a myth that he was a radical activist of the civil rights movement; he was far too pragmatic for that. Actively supporting the civil rights movement more than he did would have destroyed his support in the South and make what Nixon would later call the 'silent majority' everywhere else uneasy. His presidency did not bring solid change, and his successor Lyndon B Johnson would do far more, but it was a rallying cry for a new beginning. By meeting King and publicly endorsing the ideal of civil rights for all, even if he did not actively support the campaign in practice, would give civil rights the national platform it needed and Kennedy's own celebrity endorsement to bring civil rights to the top of the national agenda. As Arthur Schlesinger, a social commentator in the Sixties observed, "He had quietly created an atmosphere where change, when it came, would seem no longer an upheaval, but the inexorable unfolding of the promise of American life." Kennedy would not go eyeball-to-eyeball with civil rights, but he would with Communism. It was the realms of foreign affairs where he would make his stand, where there could be no comprise, and where the legend of Kennedy's confrontation with the Soviets would change the world forever.

Communism was not only objectionable as far as Kennedy was concerned, but a moral evil. It stood against everything he believed about human rights and human dignity. The Communist leadership were godless, their state control oppressed its own people and their vast armies oppressed the people of the globe; it was to be despised. When he made his inaugural address he spoke of not daring to "tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed." This was the hard line of the Cold War warrior – create the biggest conventional and nuclear arsenal available to scare the Communists into never attacking the free world, and Kennedy believed in it completely. He would go on to talk about the need for reconciliation, but warned against negotiating "out of fear." He had followed the line of Theodore Roosevelt, the man who flexed American muscle at the turn of the century: tread softly on the international stage, but carry a big stick.

Rhetoric would turn to action when Kennedy gave the green light to the ill-fated Bay of Pigs operation, later to be known as the 'undeniable fiasco'. It was the first major military undertaking of his presidency, but the plan was ill-conceived and deeply flawed from the beginning. Even Kennedy talked about plausible deniability of the whole affair by its end. The plan was for the CIA to land thousands of military-trained Cuban exiles onto the Cuban mainland and, by proxy, try to enact a coup. It relied on Castro not being in full control of Cuba, although unfortunately for Kennedy he was. As the invasion party landed, Cubans loyal to Castro bombed and machine-gunned the exiles into the sea, causing horrendous casualties. CIA chiefs pleaded with the president to allow the US air force to support the exiles, and initially Kennedy was inclined to agree, saying, "I'd rather be called an aggressor than a bum." Soviet interest in the affair would cool his aggression, and after tense diplomatic negotiation he shied away from further intervention with US air support in case the Russians were "apt to cause trouble." It was seen as a betrayal by the CIA and the Cuban exiles, who were left without adequate air cover and died in their hundreds on Cuban beaches. Neither the CIA nor the exiles would forget it.

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50 YEARS ON

KENNEDY CONNECTIONS

INDUSTRY

POLITICS

HOLLYWOOD

CRIME


ENTREPRENEUR

George Skakel
Father-in-law to Bobby Kennedy and founder of the Great Lakes Carbon Corporation.

John Vernou Bouvier III
John Vernou 'Black Jack' Bouvier was a key link for the Kennedys into the world of business and high society. He owned land, and was a successful stockbroker. His nickname 'Black Jack' was acquired through his love of gambling and drinking.


SISTER-IN-LAW

Ethel Kennedy
Wife to Bobby, Ethel provided the Kennedys with a link to one of the country's biggest businesses: the Great Lakes Carbon Corporation.


BROTHER

Robert 'Bobby' Kennedy
Brother to Jack and Attorney-General to the United States, Bobby was part of the inner circle of the Kennedy family, connected to huge industry concerns through his wife Ethel and the CIA.


BROTHER

Ted Kennedy
The youngest brother of the Kennedy family, Ted was a senator and key voice of support for the Kennedy political machine though Jack's presidency and Bobby's bid for presidential nomination.


FATHER-IN-LAW


FATHER

Joe Kennedy
A major hub in the Kennedy connection, Joe was one of the main routes into politics for Jack, and also maintained links with Hollywood.

Jackie Kennedy
Wife of the president, Jackie provided the Kennedy family with one of many links into the upper echelons of American society. Her family, through her father's business concerns, were extremely wealthy and she was an extremely popular socialite.


WIFE




JUDGE

William J Tuohy
Tuohy was the chief judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County Illinois and provided Joe with a link to Sam Giancana who, it is rumoured, helped Joe and Jack gain Mafia support for the key electoral battleground in Illinois.


SISTER

Patricia Lawford
Patricia, sister to Jack and husband to the A-list celebrity actor Peter, provided another strong link from the White House to Hollywood and the California celebrity scene.


LOVER

Judith Campbell
Judith Campbell was a mistress of Kennedy and a self-proclaimed conduit between him and the Mafia. She was also linked to mob bosses John Roselli and Sam Giancana.

Peter Lawford
Peter Lawford was a member of the Kennedy family through marriage and also part of the 'rat pack' with its Mafia connections, and a close friend to Frank Sinatra. He was also linked with Marilyn Monroe, and arranged meetings with her for the President.


BROTHER-IN-LAW


FRIEND

Frank Sinatra
Frank Sinatra knew many members of the Kennedy family, most notably Joe and Bobby Kennedy and the President himself. He acted as a go-between for the three men, allowing them to meet famous celebrities like Marilyn Monroe, who he was having an affair with. He also provided the Kennedys with links to the Mafia, and at times set up dates for them with women when their wives were away.


MOB BOSS

Sam Giancana
Mob boss and head of the main crime family in Chicago, Sam was connected to the Kennedys through Frank Sinatra and Judith Campbell. It was alleged that the CIA employed his associates to kill Fidel Castro.


LOVER

Marilyn Monroe
Kennedy's relationship with Monroe is steeped in mystery. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the two shared a sexual relationship, although this was never fully proven.


MOB BOSS

John Roselli
Mob boss and connected to Sam Giancana, Roselli was involved in the Mafia-run casinos in Cuba, and one of the mobsters that the CIA recruited to kill Castro. He was reportedly sleeping with Judith Campbell during the period when she was having an affair with the President.


SPOOK

William King Harvey
Harvey was a CIA spook who reportedly recruited Mafia kingpins Roselli and Giancana to kill Castro with the quiet blessing of Bobby Kennedy.

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FIRST LADY

Jackie Kennedy was a woman of intelligence, beauty and money; a true American socialite. She was born into one of the wealthiest Catholic families in America, and her father, John Vernou 'Black Jack' Bouvier, owned land and capital throughout the Northeast. She met Jack through her work as a photographer in Washington DC, marrying him on 12 September 1953 after a whirlwind romance. In many ways she set the tone for future First Ladies.

Like her husband she courted the media, making sure she always dressed immaculately and remained on message for press interviews. But she also made the position her own, and was a force for change in the White House, seeing to it that the unique furniture, ornaments and pictures within its rooms were preserved and catalogued, where before they had either been lost or neglected by previous occupants. She established the post of White House Curator, and created the White House Fine Arts Committee to protect the treasures inside its walls. She could also speak several foreign languages, which she would use to her advantage on goodwill missions abroad. Her charm and grace enamoured foreign dignitaries, and after one trip to Paris, Vienna and Greece, Clark Clifford, advisor to the president sent her a congratulatory note saying, "Once in a great while, an individual will capture the imagination of people all over the world. You have done this... through your graciousness and tact." As her celebrity status spread, she received so much fan mail that it required 13 people to process the letters. Often they were deeply personal, with a girl from Indonesia writing, "I've seen pictures of you. I am studying English because I admire you so much." Another from a Japanese girl said, "My mother tells me not to slump so that I will grow up to be tall and queenly like you." She became so popular that her husband often joked that it was Jackie people wanted to see. She always put her family first, ensuring that her children were well-cared for and educated, saying to a reporter, "If you bungle raising your children, I don't think whatever else you do well matters very much."

The failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion did not temper the attitudes of the president or his closest advisors; quite the contrary. The disaster convinced the Kennedy administration that the Communists needed to be taken seriously, as anymore failures would risk goading aggressive Communist intentions. In the highly pressurised environment of the White House, straight-talking, hard-ball attitudes and the concoction of the 'red menace' frequently turned strategy into personal vendettas against the Communist leadership for the Kennedy family. Bobby Kennedy, Jack's younger brother and Attorney-General for the American government, would take the Bay of Pigs disaster as a personal slight against him. Castro had made the Kennedy family (and the US) look weak, and now he was going to "get him" by any means necessary, even commissioning a plan for an exploding seashell to be planted at Castro's favourite diving spot to take his head off. Conversely, Jack didn't order a full invasion of Cuba, nor any provocative move in that region until it was absolutely necessary. In a famous comment made to an aide about the prospect of an American invasion of Cuba, he said; "The minute I land one marine we're in this thing up to our necks. I can't get the United States into a war and then lose it, no matter what it takes. I'm not going to risk a slaughter".

But Kennedy's caution was still infused with the influence of manful bravado inherited from his patriarchal family and the hawks in his own government, who were ever-ready to go toe-to-toe with the Communists. Ultimately, his refusal to 'blink' during the blockade of Cuba brought the world to the brink of nuclear war: for 13 days in 1962, he held the fate of billions in his hands in order to prove to the Russian Premier Khrushchev that when it came to American security there could be no compromise. As with the Bay of Pigs, it was also intensely personal. Kennedy felt deceived by the Soviets, who were talking to him about nuclear disarmament while installing medium-range missiles on the Cuban mainland. He called the Soviets "barefaced liars" and hurled expletives whenever he heard the names of Castro or Khrushchev during meetings in the run up to the blockade. They had made him look foolish and soft on the Communist problem, and the blockade represented the most he could do to confront them without tipping the world into a nuclear holocaust.

Rational thinking gave way to zero-sum thinking on the nature of the international Communist threat after the Cuban Missile Crisis, even if by this point impartial evidence suggested that Communism was not only far weaker, but also hopelessly divided among its global constituents. To Kennedy, however, ever-ready to fight the good fight, the threat was still real and it was engulfing south-east Asia. He ordered more military advisors



Kennedy looks deep in thought as he awaits developments in the Cuban crisis that could have escalated to nuclear war



President Kennedy presiding over a meeting with senior White House officials during the Cuban Missile Crisis

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into Vietnam, as well as the creation of a new fighting force designed to combat Communist insurgents at grass-roots level: the Green Berets .

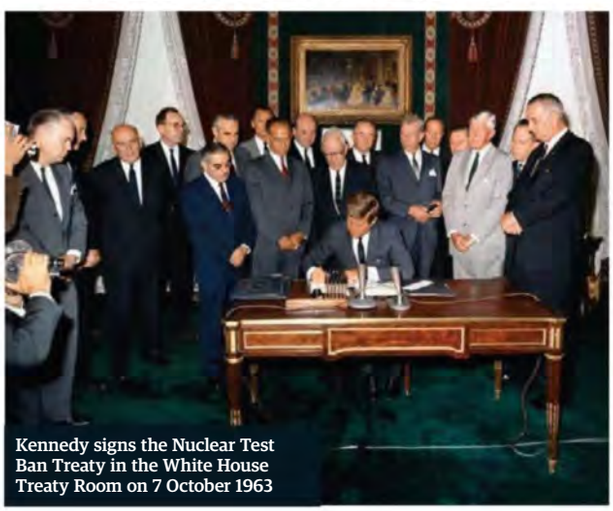
He publicly endorsed the Diem regime in South Vietnam led by Ngo Dinh Diem, despite private reservations about their effectiveness and cruelty to their own people. As the war intensified, Diem, a stanch Catholic, was drawing ever more criticism from his own people, the majority of who were Buddhist. After brutal crackdowns on the Buddhist community at the beginning of 1963, monks set themselves on fire in the middle of a busy street in Saigon in protest. The response by one of Diem's closet advisors, his sister-in-law Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, was heartless. She told a CBS film crew that the Buddhists had just "barbecued" themselves, and next time she would provide the mustard. For Kennedy, a man who lived shoulder to shoulder with the media, this was a disaster. The regime that America was supposed to be protecting was in fact a cruel dictatorship. Kennedy's troops remained in Vietnam even after the brutal events of 1963 as Diem's regime may have been harsh, but as far as Kennedy's administration was concerned, at least it wasn't Communist.

The memory of Kennedy's legendary stand-off with Communism would linger in the halls of the White House after his death. No future president would dare look weak in front of the Communist lest they appeared weaker than Kennedy, prompting a military invasion of Vietnam by Johnson and a perception that any failure to contain Communism throughout the globe was a de-facto failure of the current American administration. Debates about whether the Vietnam War would have been conducted differently if Kennedy had been at the helm continue to endure. Kennedy balked at appearing weak in front of the Communists, but he was a far more able negotiator than his successors and, it is said by some, would

"The memory of Kennedy's legendary stand-off with Communism would linger in the halls of the White House"



Kennedy meets with US Army officials during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962



Kennedy signs the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in the White House Treaty Room on 7 October 1963



President and Mrs Kennedy with leaders of the Cuban Invasion Brigade

THE OTHER WOMEN

MARILYN MONROE



The Marilyn Monroe affair was probably the most infamous of Kennedy's relationships during his time in government. The two met through Peter Lawford on four separate occasions, one of which, it is claimed, resulted in sexual relations. Her raunchy rendition of *Happy Birthday* during Kennedy's 45th birthday celebrations and the dress she was wearing at the time, described as "flesh with sequins sewed onto it," left little to the imagination.

JUDITH CAMPBELL



Long the subject of repeated denials and cover-ups, until revelations in the Seventies revealed that Kennedy indeed had an on-off affair with Campbell, who was also linked with Mob bosses Sam Giancana and John Roselli. It was one of the most enduring affairs Kennedy had, and he was aware of the risks to his political career of sleeping with a woman with connections to the Mafia, but carried on.

GUNILLA VON POST



The Von Post affair started just after Kennedy was married. Von Post was a Swedish socialite, meeting Kennedy on the French Riviera after her aristocratic family sent her there to brush up on her French. A passionate affair ensued, with graphic love letters and lustful liaisons occurring throughout the Fifties. The tryst was so serious that Kennedy reportedly considered leaving Jackie for her, but feared his father's reaction.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY... SOPHIA LOREN

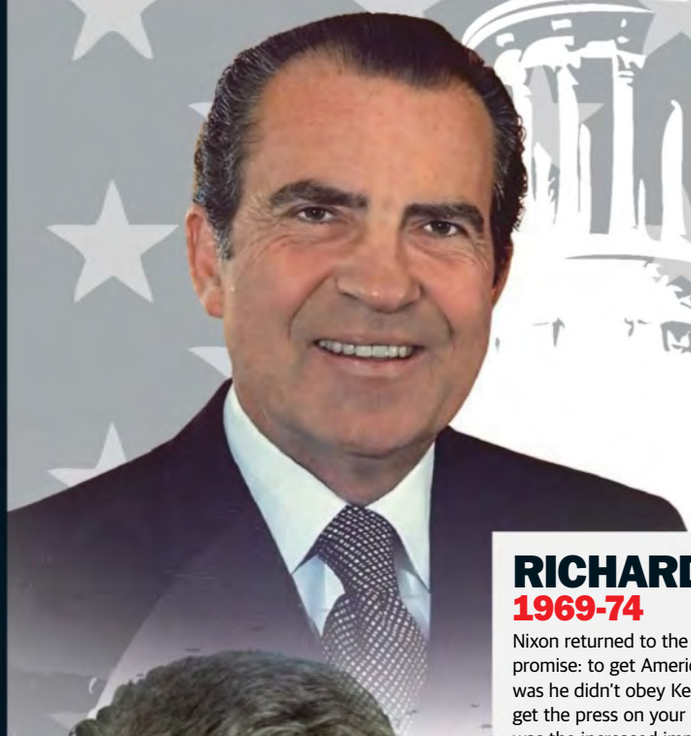


In a rather embarrassing episode, Sophia Loren, one of the most iconic film stars of the age, turned Kennedy down, and in no uncertain terms told him and his lackey to leave her alone during a dinner at the Italian Embassy in Washington in the late Fifties. This was despite Kennedy's gallant offer to include her female interpreter in a night of passion so that she didn't feel left out.

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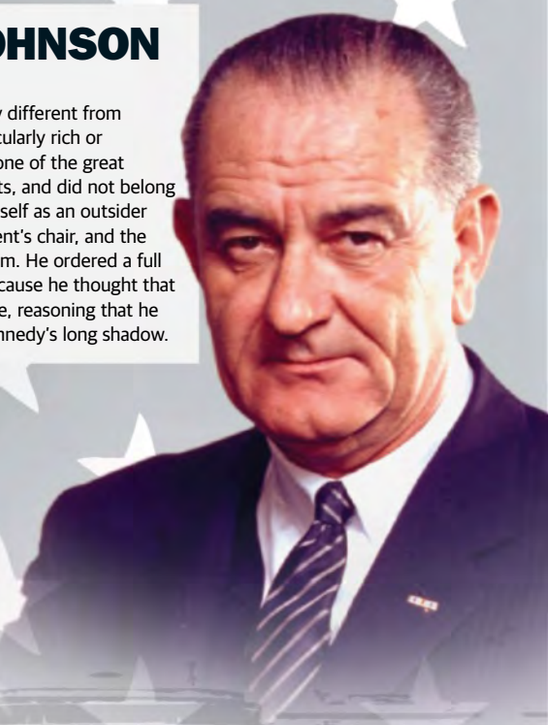
50 YEARS ON

KENNEDY'S INFLUENCE



LYNDON B JOHNSON
1963-69

Johnson's ascent to power was very different from Kennedy's. His family was not particularly rich or influential, he was not educated in one of the great American educational establishments, and did not belong to the Washington 'set'. He saw himself as an outsider when he was thrust into the President's chair, and the ghost of his predecessor haunted him. He ordered a full military commitment in Vietnam because he thought that was what Kennedy would have done, reasoning that he could not afford to look weak in Kennedy's long shadow.



RICHARD NIXON
1969-74

Nixon returned to the White House in 1969 with one promise: to get America out of Vietnam. The problem was he didn't obey Kennedy's unofficial rule for success: get the press on your side. Part of Kennedy's legacy was the increased importance of the press and image. Unfortunately, Nixon had neither the words nor the persona to control the crises in image he faced. In the wake of the Kent State University shootings and the Watergate scandal, his credibility was destroyed and he resigned in the face of almost certain impeachment.



BILL CLINTON
1993-2001

Bill Clinton's relationship with the media during his presidential campaign, his easy charm, down-to-earth persona and photogenic appearance on chat shows and live television debates was certainly influenced by Kennedy's media legend. In fact, Clinton and Kennedy's campaigns were very similar. In both cases the liberal underdog was going up against established right-wing thinking – in Clinton's case it was George HW Bush. It was also the impressive way that Clinton's team organised his campaign by setting out key goals but presenting them in an informal manner, much like Kennedy's 'new age' in American life, that won Clinton the presidency.



BARACK OBAMA
2009-present

Obama's 'Hope' campaign in 2009 that the US could 'Rise again' in a new age of prosperity bears marked resemblances to the Kennedy campaign. The idea of 'renewal' has been a strong theme in American elections, and Obama used it to great effect in 2009 after the disillusionment felt by many post-Bush administration.

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have brought Vietnam to a peaceful conclusion far quicker and with less casualties. But part of Kennedy's success was due to his international grandstanding. His image as young, energetic and tough chimed well with the mood of a US that wanted a nation that was assertive and cut away from the stagnation of the Eisenhower years and the defeats under Truman. It is unlikely that he would have ordered a full withdrawal at Vietnam, but part of his enduring persona has, like the issues surrounding civil rights, created a myth that things would have been very different – and a lot better – had he survived.

The bleak days of November 1963 would haunt America forever. Kennedy's funeral took place on 25 November, three days after his assassination. As his funeral procession made its long march up to St Matthew's Cathedral, it was accompanied by Black Jack, a riderless horse symbolising the loss of a great leader. When his casket was brought out after the service, foreign dignitaries including Charles de Gaulle of France and thousands of American citizens watched in silence. Troops of the United States Navy brought the casket down the steep steps, and as it reached the bottom Jackie Kennedy knelt down and whispered to her son, John Jr; "John, you can salute your daddy now and say goodbye to him." Author William Manchester noted, "Of all of Monday's images, nothing approached the force of John's salute... it was heart-wrenching." In summing up the day's events, columnist Mary McGrory wrote of "grief nobly borne." Kennedy's final resting place was the Arlington National Cemetery – as befitting an American hero.

On hearing of Kennedy's death, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said that Kennedy embodied "all the hopes and aspirations of this new world." His influence continues to be felt; Barack Obama's 'Hope' campaign for a new beginning in the US was influenced by Kennedy's own in 1960. Kennedy was a man that could be admired, followed and respected. His death shocked everyone, and his boundless potential and hope for a better and more peaceful world was lost forever, along with the man that he might have become.

> "John F Kennedy's final resting place was the Arlington National Cemetery – as befitting an American hero"

WHAT BECAME OF THE KENNEDY CLAN?

1. Eunice
Eunice was a strong advocate for the Democratic party, and married Robert Sargent Shiver Jr, who became the US Ambassador to France and Democratic Vice Presidential candidate in 1972. She was a vocal supporter of pro-life views, and her daughter Maria would marry actor turned Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger. She died of a stroke in 2009.

3. Rosemary
Rosemary suffered from violent mood swings, and was not as academically talented as her siblings. She was said to be beautiful and happy during her teenage years, but her apparent slowness grated on her father. In 1941, at the age of 23, he decided that she should have a lobotomy to calm her mood swings, which caused irreversible damage to her brain. She died in 2005.

5. Joe
Ambitious, tenacious and at times cruel, Joe fought his entire life to ensure his family remained at the top of American political life. When he finally achieved his main goal – getting one of his sons in the presidency – he suffered a debilitating stroke that left him paralysed and with impaired speech. He died shortly after the death of his son, Bobby, in 1969.

7. Rose
The wife of Joe and a constant source of stability for the Kennedy family as a whole, Rose would see the death of three of her sons and her second daughter, the shocking after-effects of a lobotomised first daughter and the constant humiliations of her husband's extra-marital affairs. Despite all of this, she was dedicated to her family and their well-being, and was described by Jackie Kennedy as a "thoroughbred" who did "everything to put one at one's ease." She died in 1995 at the age of 104.

9. Patricia
Patricia entered the world of the media in 1945 as an assistant in NBC's production department in New York. She married Peter Lawford, the English actor connected to the 'rat pack' and various Hollywood movie stars including Marilyn Monroe. She divorced Lawford in 1966 after revelations about his affairs with other women, and later moved to New York, devoting herself to charitable causes. She died in 2006.



2. John F
John ascended to the presidency in 1961, before being brutally assassinated in 1963. His politics and ideals changed both the US and the world, with his legacy dwarfing his short lifespan.

4. Jean
Jean was exceptionally gifted academically, and entered politics as a Democrat, eventually becoming the US ambassador to Ireland during the Clinton administration. She was a key politician during the run-up to the IRA ceasefire and the Good Friday Agreement of the Nineties.

6. Ted
Ted was the youngest of the male siblings in the Kennedy family, and won John's Senate seat in 1962 aged just 30 – the youngest age allowed. He looked set to follow his older sibling into the White House when he was involved in a car crash that killed a young woman after a party in 1969. He fled the scene and only called the police the next morning, hours after the incident – by which time the woman's body had already been discovered. He remained in politics and became one of the longest-running Senators in American history. He fought for free Healthcare for the American people throughout his career, calling it "The cause of my life." He died of brain cancer in 2009.

8. Joseph P Jr
Joe Jr was being groomed as the first Irish-Catholic president of the United States. He attended top schools, and his father laid the groundwork for him to become a congressmen of Massachusetts before America's entry into World War II. He served in the US Navy as a pilot during the war, flying B-24 bombers and died on duty in a plane explosion over Suffolk.

10. Robert
Robert followed Jack into politics, becoming Attorney General during the Kennedy administration and promoting civil rights. After Jack's death he too would bid for the presidency. He was assassinated during election season for the Democratic nomination in 1968.

11. Kathleen
Kathleen married into English aristocracy after spending time in England when her father was Ambassador to Britain in the Forties. She married William Cavendish, the Marquess of Hartington. She became a journalist and volunteered her time in the British Red Cross before dying in a plane crash in 1948.

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A HISTORY OF CONSPIRACY

Why the mystery and intrigue surrounding the JFK assassination shows no signs of abating

Written by Chris Fenton

At 12.30pm on 22 November 1963, the world stopped and gasped in horror. John F Kennedy, the man who many Americans saw as propelling their country into a new era of hope and freedom, was shot as his motorcade travelled through the streets of Dallas, Texas. There were three gunshots: the first missed, the second struck his throat, and the third hit his head. He was immediately rushed to the nearby Parkland Memorial Hospital and, as one news reporter said, "For 30 agonising minutes, Americans heard and waited and kept the death watch in unprecedented numbers." Despite the prayers of an entire nation, Kennedy was pronounced dead soon after.

In the aftermath, Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B Johnson, commissioned an enquiry into the assassination in an attempt to discover the truth behind the circumstances surrounding Kennedy's death. The enquiry was rushed, its evidence – the Warren Report – questionable, and its findings inconclusive. There was general consensus that Lee Harvey Oswald, a psychopathic loner, was responsible for the shooting, but large elements of the American populace smelt a cover up. How did Oswald manage to shoot the president from such a steep angle? How did he reload his cumbersome bolt-action rifle in such a short amount of time to fatally shoot Kennedy? What about the reports of gunshots coming from the streets surrounding the president? These questions stem from one overarching theory: that there was a second gunman firing on the motorcade during the assassination.

Proponents of the second gunman theory claimed that there was no way Oswald could have acted alone as the Warren Report concluded. Doubts emerged after reenactments of the shooting found that the second bullet wounding Kennedy in his throat and that simultaneously struck the governor of Texas, John Connally, in the back, chest, right wrist and left thigh could not have achieved these injuries unless the bullet turned 90 degrees to the right to reach Connally's back. There had to be a second gunman somewhere in the crowd or within the nearby buildings to make the trajectory match up with the wounds sustained – unless the single bullet could magically turn 90 degrees in mid air. A possible location for the second shooter was the Grassy Knoll, where witnesses claimed they heard gunshots and saw smoke as the shots hit Kennedy. It offered a perfect sight line, good cover and an escape route across train lines leading away from Elm Street. Several witnesses who were standing between the Grassy Knoll and the motorcade claimed they were in the 'line of fire', with subsequent reports suggesting that a man may have been carrying a gun behind a fence near the Knoll's location. Three suspects later identified as homeless men were arrested by the Dallas Police as they were walking away from the Knoll, adding fuel to the raging fire of suspicion that there was another gunman within this area.

> "Proponents of the second gunman theory claimed that there was no way Oswald could have acted alone"

The Zapruder film – silent colour footage of Kennedy's visit to Dallas shot by amateur photographer Abraham Zapruder – unintentionally captured the whole event, and was used as 'evidence' by proponents of the second gunman theory. If the Warren Report was to be believed, the bullet that hit Kennedy also struck Connally, instantly wounding both men. However, the timing of the bullet hitting Kennedy and than travelling through Kennedy's body onto Connally did not tally with what was on the Zapruder film. If the single bullet had hit both men then they would have both reacted on the same film frame at the same time. On the frame that captured the moment of the shooting, Kennedy reacts immediately to the second bullet hitting him, grasping his throat, but there is no response from Connally on the same frame. Connally reacts to the bullet hitting him several frames later, meaning that according to the theory there must have been another shot that hit Connally.

Autopsy reports of the president's head wounds also contradicted eyewitness statements on the scene. The autopsy stressed that the bullet entered the skull at an angle consistent with the position of Oswald's rifle in the Texas Book Depository, causing catastrophic damage to the brain. But eyewitness accounts said the president's head 'blew up', causing skull fragments and brain matter

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Accused: John F Kennedy's assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, shows his handcuffs while being escorted in the Dallas Police Department headquarters hallway

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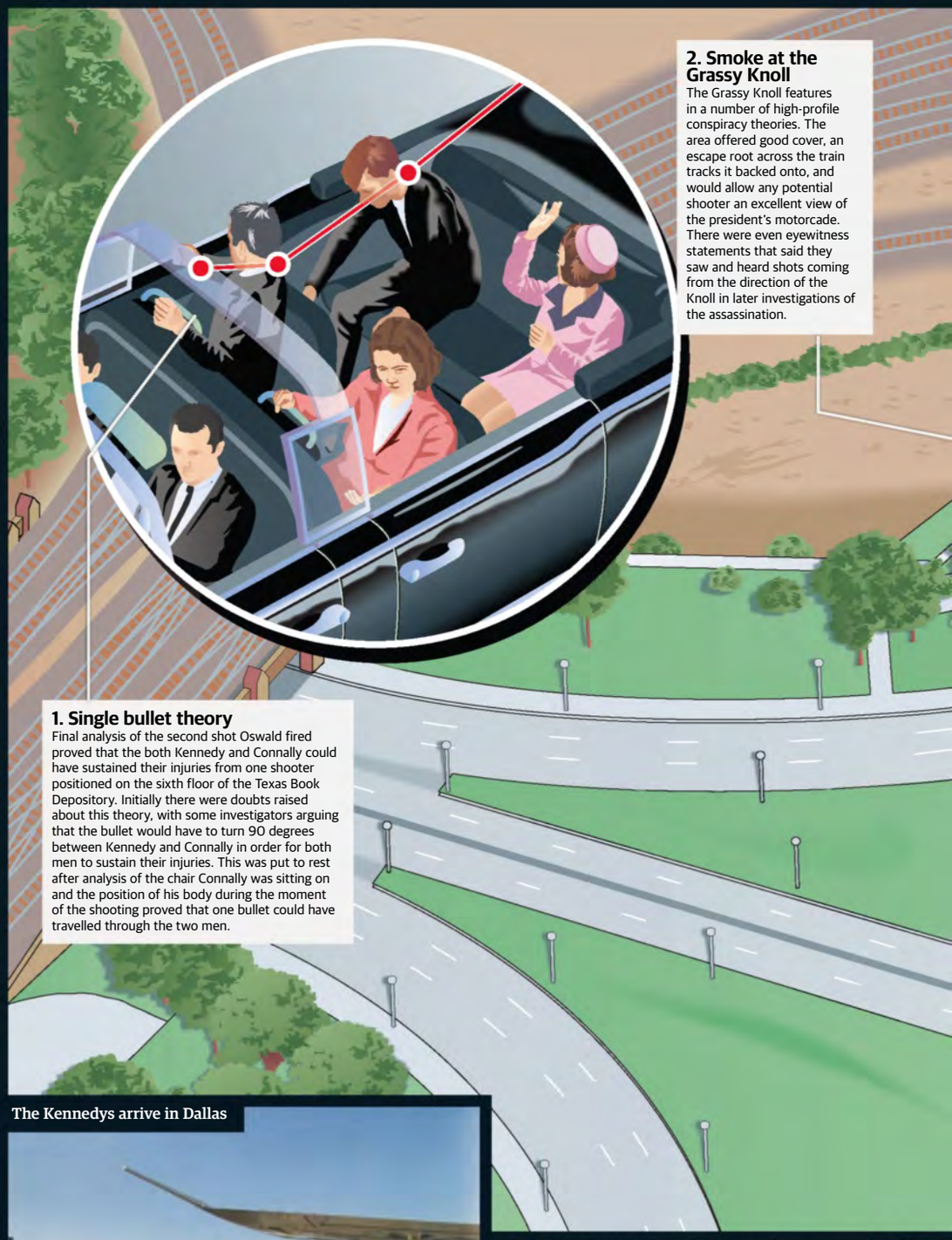
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to fly up and scatter across the motorcade onto the road. If that was the case then the autopsy report had to be wrong, since a gunshot wound fired from a single rifle at the angle that Oswald was aiming at would not have impacted the president's skull in that way. There must have been someone else shooting who was closer to the motorcade to make the bullet wound cause the described injuries.

The second gunman theory perhaps presents the single most enduring conspiracy of all time. There are parts of the theory that are compelling, and a House of Representatives committee meeting in 1979 concluded that the presence of a second gunman was a real possibility. However, the theory has significant problems, as it emphasises certain aspects of the evidence but ignores others. For example, there is a photograph that shows both Kennedy and Connally reacting to Oswald's second shot at the same time, completely debunking the evidence on the Zapruder film. Other films of the incident show people around the Grassy Knoll behaving normally when the suspected shots from that location were said to have been fired, even though the shockwave of the bullets would have caused a physical reaction. Further ballistic evidence and the position of the seat Connally was sitting on in Kennedy's limousine prove that the bullet could have maintained its trajectory, giving Kennedy and Connally their injuries. The head shot problem was also solved with test firing from the same model of rifle Oswald used, which proved that a shot from the nearby Texas Book Depository could have caused the witnessed head injuries.

Despite this and other evidence gathered later which supported the Warren Report's findings, the US in the Sixties was in no mood to listen to the establishment's explanations. How could a man that seemed larger than life, that led their country, be killed by a slightly pathetic individual? The second gunman theory was plausible, and that was enough. If there was another shooter and he was working with Oswald, this meant that this wasn't the work of a deranged loner, but a coordinated attack on one of the most outspoken yet celebrated presidents in history. The conspiracy theories then shifted from the mystery of the second gunman to the shadowy organisations that were employing them.

Immediate suspects were the common enemies of all good, freedom-loving Americans: the Communists and the Mafia. The Communist connection appeared the strongest, and Kennedy's provocation of the Soviet Union and Cuba, as well as the popular belief that Oswald himself was a Communist, focused the spotlight of suspicion onto a red plot to kill Kennedy. Oswald had lived in the Soviet Union in his younger years after he was discharged from the Marines. He had also become obsessed with Socialist literature and weaponry during his troubled and impoverished youth. On his return to the United States from Russia he became a supporter of Cuban dictator



2. Smoke at the Grassy Knoll
The Grassy Knoll features in a number of high-profile conspiracy theories. The area offered good cover, an escape root across the train tracks it backed onto, and would allow any potential shooter an excellent view of the president's motorcade. There were even eyewitness statements that said they saw and heard shots coming from the direction of the Knoll in later investigations of the assassination.

1. Single bullet theory
Final analysis of the second shot Oswald fired proved that the both Kennedy and Connally could have sustained their injuries from one shooter positioned on the sixth floor of the Texas Book Depository. Initially there were doubts raised about this theory, with some investigators arguing that the bullet would have to turn 90 degrees between Kennedy and Connally in order for both men to sustain their injuries. This was put to rest after analysis of the chair Connally was sitting on and the position of his body during the moment of the shooting proved that one bullet could have travelled through the two men.



The Kennedys arrive in Dallas



The assassination of JFK

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3. The three tramps
In the area just behind the Grassy Knoll, three homeless men, who were heading away from the Plaza out of town, were arrested by the Dallas Police minutes after the shootings. It was said that one of these men bore a striking resemblance to a CIA agent, implicating government involvement in the shooting. The fact that they were walking away from the Knoll, a place that was suspected to be the location of a possible second shooter, fuelled this theory.

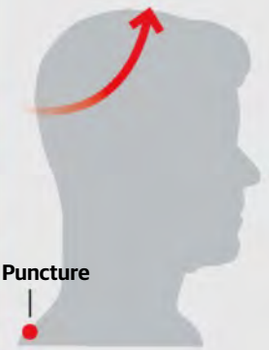
4. Oswald's vantage point
Oswald selected the Texas Book Depository as his shooting position. There are a number of suspicions as to why he picked this position and waited for the President's motorcade to turn into Elm Street before he began firing. Houston Street offered a clear line of sight for him, while Elm Street was covered with trees. There is a theory that he was waiting to triangulate his shots with a second gunman standing behind the Knoll.

5. Kennedy's Motorcade
Kennedy's limousine was occupied by himself and Jackie sitting in the back seats and the Governor of Texas, John Connally and his wife Nellie in the front passenger seats. In the moments before Kennedy was shot, Connally turned to Kennedy and said: "You can't say that Dallas isn't friendly to you today." It was at this moment that Oswald fired. The first shot missed, the second hit Kennedy and Connally simultaneously and the third struck Kennedy in the head. The position of Connally's body was angled awkwardly because he was turning around waiting for Kennedy's response. Connally's positioning explained why the second shot wounded him in the way that it did.

KENNEDY'S WOUNDS THEORIES



Dallas doctors
Claimed bullet's direction did not tally with Oswald's position



Puncture

FBI version
Reported he was shot twice, but these accounts were disputed



Navy view
Came closet to the now mostly accepted truth



Oswald protests his innocence



The arrest of the three 'tramps'



Members of the Warren Commission present their report on the assassination of JFK to President Johnson

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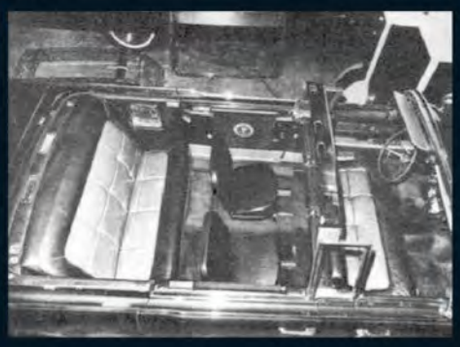
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Arlen Specter of the Warren Commission reproducing the assumed alignment of the single bullet theory



The view of the sniper to Elm Street





Oswald is shot by Jack Ruby as he is moved by police in 1963

Fidel Castro, and there were whisperings that he had met a Cuban spy in Mexico a few months before the shooting. This made it entirely plausible that the Cubans had paid or otherwise persuaded Oswald to kill the president. While the Mexico connection was disproved, Oswald's Communist leanings were widely publicised, as was his violent personality, obsession with rifles and skill as a Marine marksman.

As the Communist theory swept through the country, the shooting of Oswald before he could be brought to trail by the known mobster Jack Ruby on 24 November 1963 stoked a new suspicion: the mob. The Kennedy family's connection with the mob entwined to form a dark web, and it included Joe Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy, Patricia Kennedy and even Jack himself. All four of them had, at one point or another, been exposed to men and women connected to the Mafia, to the point where Joe allegedly struck a deal with the Chicago outfit to help Jack win the 1960 election.

Mafia kingpin Sam Giancana or one of his affiliates could have employed Oswald and the second gunman to kill Kennedy for trying to shut down the Mafia's control of trade unions and rackets that dominated American cities. They then may have employed Ruby to kill Oswald to prevent him from talking about the Mafia's involvement in the assassination. Or perhaps Ruby himself was the second shooter; he knew Oswald was going to talk after he was arrested, and shot him before he had a chance to make a confession. Of course, these theories rest on the assumption that the Mafia trusted Ruby and had enough confidence in him to be sure that he'd remain quiet about the Mafia's involvement when the inevitable police investigation unfolded. While Ruby was certainly connected to the Mafia, there's no evidence to suggest that he was a key figure within it, casting genuine doubt on whether mob bosses would have trusted him enough to get so deeply involved in the assassination of Kennedy.

The US was changing in the Sixties, and a large part of this was due to the war in Vietnam dragging on, killing thousands and spreading popular disaffection and protest against the government. Paranoia of the government's dark underbelly stemming from the deep betrayal the American people felt over Vietnam caused a toxic atmosphere of suspicion and animosity. It was during this period that the conspiracy theories changed. Instead of an external enemy or one that operated outside of the law, the enemy – reflecting the suspicious mood of the nation – became the government itself. Elements of the CIA and corporate America were implicated, and the popular belief that Kennedy was going to pull the troops out of Vietnam, or at least conduct the war with more sense and less firepower, fuelled the suspicion that the assassination was the result of one huge cover-up.

Circumstantial evidence implicating the CIA could be found with the arrest of three homeless men near the vicinity of the Grassy Knoll. One of them bore a striking resemblance to a CIA agent called Frank Sturgis, who was involved in the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion. Was it possible, through this rather shaky piece of pictorial evidence, that the second gunman was a CIA agent working in conjunction with Oswald to kill the president?

There were two popular theories as to why the CIA would kill its own president, the first being based purely on revenge. It was widely thought that the CIA had never forgiven Kennedy after he refused to support them at the Bay of Pigs, and they were now determined to take revenge on him. Talk of Cuban exiles, defeated at the Bay of Pigs, working with the CIA to form a splinter cell to kill Kennedy was mooted, as was the idea that Oswald was somehow linked to the CIA through his career in the Marines. There was, after all, a precedent for this: before the assassination the CIA was using Cuban exiles and other assassins to try to kill Castro. The second theory ran far deeper into the instruments of American power: it was said there were elements of the CIA who believed that Kennedy had gone soft on Communism, and was going to 'lose' Vietnam to the Communists in the same way that Harry Truman had lost China.

Along with these hardline CIA spooks were representatives from corporate America who stood to lose millions of dollars of potential weapon sales

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SUSPECTS OF THE JFK CONSPIRACY



JACK RUBY

Jack Ruby was a Mafia affiliate who shot Lee Harvey Oswald before he could testify to the assassination of Kennedy in open court. It is possible that he was the second gunman, working in partnership with Oswald or that Oswald was working with the Mafia and Ruby was sent to kill him before he had a chance to testify in court.



LYNDON B JOHNSON

It was known that Johnson wasn't in Kennedy's inner circle of advisors; he was constantly left out of the loop, and it was rumoured that Kennedy wanted to get rid of him for the run up to the next election. Theories postulate that he could have paid Oswald to do the deed to usher in his ascension to the presidency.



FRANK STURGIS

Frank Sturgis was a CIA spook who, according to witnesses and newspapers reports, was in Dallas Plaza at the time of the shooting. This was based on the picture shown, with Sturgis on the left and a drifter who looked like him on the right. The drifter was picked up by police with two other tramps. If it was Sturgis it lends weight to CIA involvement.



GUILLERMO NOVO

A Cuban exile that was embittered towards Kennedy for the failure of the Bay of Pigs operation to get Castro out of Cuba. He had the weapon skills to carry out the shooting – he was arrested for firing a bazooka at the UN building in New York in 1964 while Che Guevara was addressing the UN assembly.



FIDEL CASTRO

Fidel Castro had plenty of reasons to want to kill Kennedy, as his victory during the Cuban Missile Crisis had kept Cuba open to American attack. Kennedy's brother had also been trying to kill him for two years. It's conceivable that Castro hired Oswald, who was said to have had communist leanings, to kill the president.

in the event of a military wind-down in Vietnam. It was thought that these two factions of American political and corporate power conspired together to form a dark plot. They employed a witless nobody, Oswald, to kill the president and force the US into a war that cost thousands of American lives and millions in US tax dollars. It would line the pockets of fat-cat CEOs and appease the hawks in the CIA. These two theories were radical, deeply disturbing and would endure. Moreover, they could never be disproved, since any attempts to do so would be harshly rebuked with sentiments along the lines of 'that's what they want us to think.' It's unlikely that the American government and their affiliates could have pulled off such a spectacular cover-up and kept it a secret for so long without someone leaking indisputable evidence that the government was involved. Of course, this could be exactly what they wanted everyone to think.

It is unlikely that we will ever know the full story of the moments leading up to the assassination. There is plenty of uncorroborated evidence that points to a cover-up and a recent poll by *Time* magazine showed that 70 per cent of Americans believe that Kennedy's death was part of a wider cover-up. However, it is likely that the correct explanation is the simplest: Oswald was acting alone. It is perhaps a testament to his character that after all this time, so many people still feel that official explanations of his death do not measure up to the memory of this man. Many believed he was going to lead the US to a new dawn, and continue to search for explanations as to why his life was so brutally cut short.

> "It is unlikely that we will ever know the full story of the moments leading up to the assassination of John F Kennedy"



Lyndon B Johnson taking the oath of office on Air Force One at Love Field Airport two hours and eight minutes after the assassination

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LEONIDAS THE BRAVE

540-480 BCE

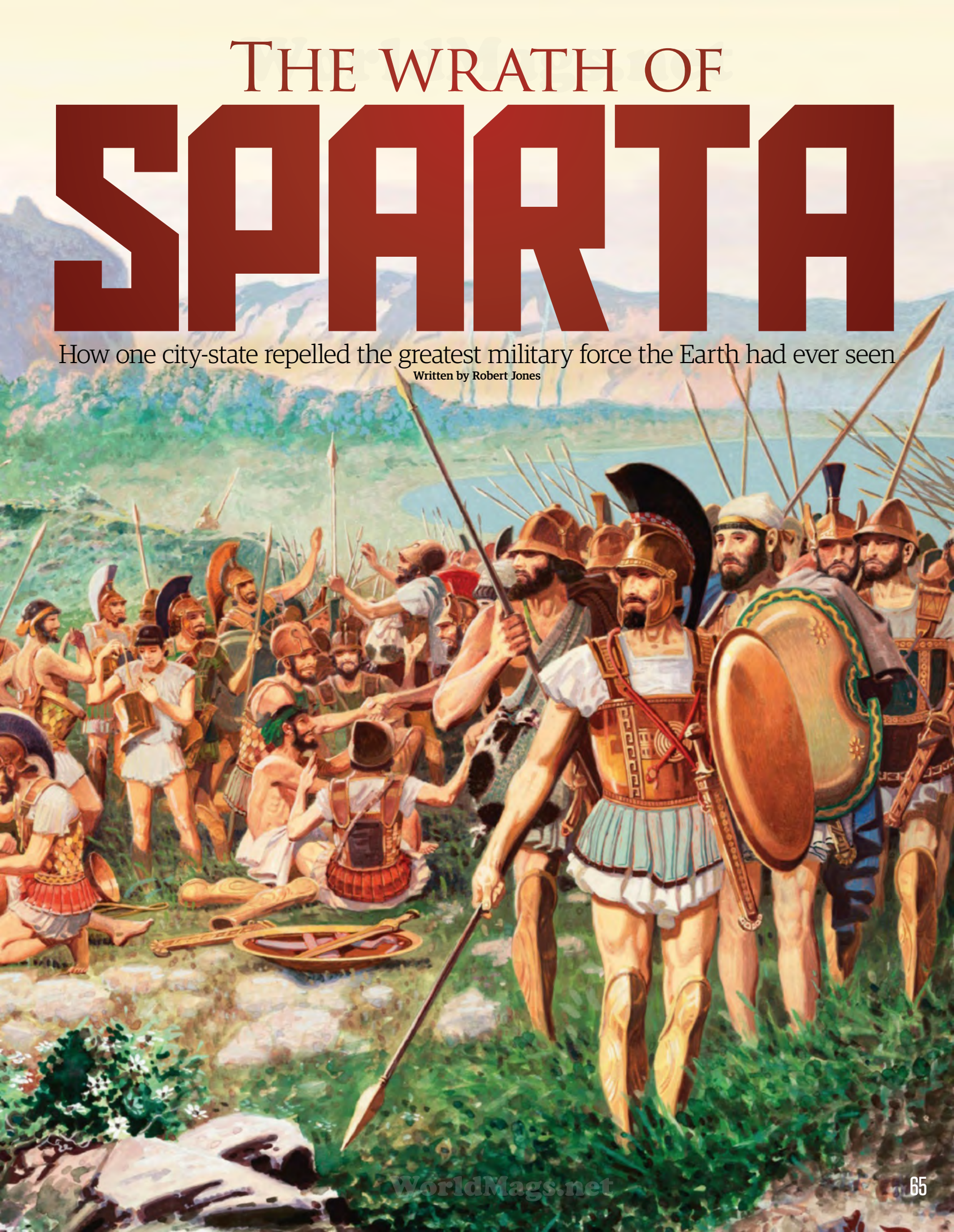
Brief Bio

Leading the Spartan resistance was the warrior-king Leonidas I, also known as Leonidas the Brave. As typical of Spartan rulers, he was an expert fighter and claimed to be descended from ancient Greek hero Heracles, from who he possessed similar attributes of strength and guile. Leonidas famously led a band of 300 Spartans to the narrow coastal path of Thermopylae, which garnered the name of the 'Hot Gates', to face the might of the vast army of Xerxes I, who was leading the second Persian invasion of Greece.

The wrath of SPARTA

How one city-state repelled the greatest military force the Earth had ever seen

Written by Robert Jones



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How hard would you fight if your home country was being invaded? Fiercely no doubt, but what would you do if it was by the largest military force that the world had ever seen? Well, if you were a Spartan, the most war-loving, brutal and savage city-state in the entirety of Greece, then you would fight – and you would do so to the last man. That is exactly what King Leonidas I of Sparta did in 480 BCE and, despite falling in battle, he fell a free man on his home country's soil and helped repel the Persians from mainland Greece once and for all.

The second Persian invasion of Greece was catalysed by the spectacular failure of the first, with the then Persian king Darius I seeing his desire to subjugate the city-states of Athens and Eretria end brutally at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE. Indeed, despite sending over 300,000 soldiers to take down the Persian's western enemy, the majority of Greece – and certainly the mainland – remained firmly out of Persian hands, with Darius himself checked in his empire's expansion for the first time. After receiving the news of the defeat, however, his will remained intact, and he began preparations for an even larger second invasion.

Unfortunately, while his will remained strong his body did not, with Darius dieing four years later during the army's assembly in 486 BCE. The control of the world's largest empire fell to his son

"Xerxes' Immortals could indeed bleed and pass screaming into the Persian underworld of Duzakh"

Xerxes I, who six years later set out to finish what his father had started. Partly blaming the Greeks for his father's perceived premature death, Xerxes drew the finest warriors from across his vast empire, including the largest contingent of Persian Immortals – their legendary elite warriors – that had ever been amassed. With an army over twice that of his father, Xerxes set sail.

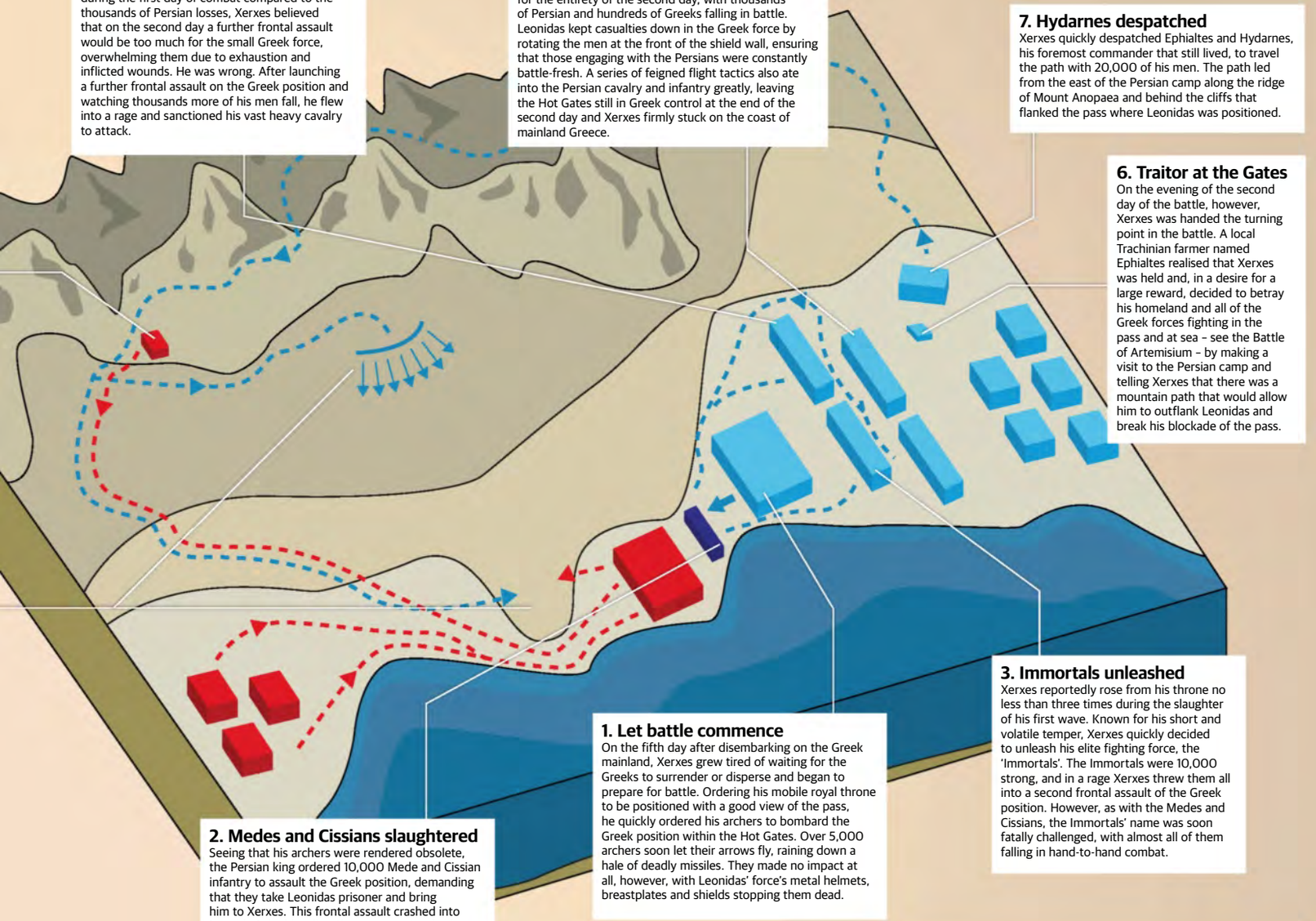
The Battle of Thermopylae in August 480 BCE may not have been the turning point in the second invasion of Greece by the Persian Empire, but it was certainly representative of why King Xerxes I of Persia eventually had to withdraw from his planned conquest of the country and return unceremoniously to Asia defeated. By combining their forces and fighting for their country, the independent city states of Greece truly demonstrated that numbers are not everything in war, as well as that tactics and ideological desire are both key in deciding the outcome of any conflict.

And talking of numbers, with regards to Xerxes' vast Persian invading army, we are talking serious

8. Phocians inform Leonidas
Leonidas, aware of this smaller secondary pass, had left a small group of Phocian troops behind to guard it. At daybreak on the third day of battle, these Phocians awoke to a terrible surprise: the Persians had discovered the path somehow and were surrounding Leonidas with a vast force. A runner was quickly sent from the Phocians to the Spartan king to inform him that the path could not be held and that they were being outflanked.

9. The last stand
Surrounded and outnumbered, Leonidas and his Spartans were assaulted by Persian archers from the Hot Gates' flanks and an infantry force of 10,000 men from the front. Realising that they would not survive, Leonidas ordered that combat be taken to Persians in the wider part of the pass, as that way more could be killed by their small force. In this final bloody and brutal fighting, two of Xerxes' brothers, Abrocomes and Hyperanthes, were killed, as well as Leonidas himself after being targeted by the flanking Persian archers. The remaining Greek forces fought bravely, but all were eventually killed. Following the deaths of around 20,000 of his men to the Greek's 2,000, the Hot Gates were now passable to Xerxes, albeit at a bloody cost.





4. The terrible wrath of Persia
Despite only handfuls of Greek warriors falling during the first day of combat compared to the thousands of Persian losses, Xerxes believed that on the second day a further frontal assault would be too much for the small Greek force, overwhelming them due to exhaustion and inflicted wounds. He was wrong. After launching a further frontal assault on the Greek position and watching thousands more of his men fall, he flew into a rage and sanctioned his vast heavy cavalry to attack.

5. Cavalry charge
The heavy cavalry attacked and combat proceeded for the entirety of the second day, with thousands of Persian and hundreds of Greeks falling in battle. Leonidas kept casualties down in the Greek force by rotating the men at the front of the shield wall, ensuring that those engaging with the Persians were constantly battle-fresh. A series of feigned flight tactics also ate into the Persian cavalry and infantry greatly, leaving the Hot Gates still in Greek control at the end of the second day and Xerxes firmly stuck on the coast of mainland Greece.

7. Hydarnes despatched
Xerxes quickly despatched Ephialtes and Hydarnes, his foremost commander that still lived, to travel the path with 20,000 of his men. The path led from the east of the Persian camp along the ridge of Mount Anopaea and behind the cliffs that flanked the pass where Leonidas was positioned.

6. Traitor at the Gates
On the evening of the second day of the battle, however, Xerxes was handed the turning point in the battle. A local Trachinian farmer named Ephialtes realised that Xerxes was held and, in a desire for a large reward, decided to betray his homeland and all of the Greek forces fighting in the pass and at sea – see the Battle of Artemisium – by making a visit to the Persian camp and telling Xerxes that there was a mountain path that would allow him to outflank Leonidas and break his blockade of the pass.

3. Immortals unleashed
Xerxes reportedly rose from his throne no less than three times during the slaughter of his first wave. Known for his short and volatile temper, Xerxes quickly decided to unleash his elite fighting force, the 'Immortals'. The Immortals were 10,000 strong, and in a rage Xerxes threw them all into a second frontal assault of the Greek position. However, as with the Medes and Cissians, the Immortals' name was soon fatally challenged, with almost all of them falling in hand-to-hand combat.

1. Let battle commence
On the fifth day after disembarking on the Greek mainland, Xerxes grew tired of waiting for the Greeks to surrender or disperse and began to prepare for battle. Ordering his mobile royal throne to be positioned with a good view of the pass, he quickly ordered his archers to bombard the Greek position within the Hot Gates. Over 5,000 archers soon let their arrows fly, raining down a hale of deadly missiles. They made no impact at all, however, with Leonidas' force's metal helmets, breastplates and shields stopping them dead.

2. Medes and Cissians slaughtered
Seeing that his archers were rendered obsolete, the Persian king ordered 10,000 Mede and Cissian infantry to assault the Greek position, demanding that they take Leonidas prisoner and bring him to Xerxes. This frontal assault crashed into Leonidas' shield wall as the warriors stood side-by-side within the pass, their large aspis shields interlocked. As such, the wall held, and the fiercer, better equipped and better trained Greeks soon slaughtered every last one of the invaders.



numbers – a force that according to ancient sources numbered over 1 million men, and even according to modern sources was hundreds of thousands of people strong. This force landed at the coastal pass of Thermopylae on the Malian Gulf of Greece intent on plundering the land of its natural resources and people, not to mention adding the ancient civilisation to its seemingly ever-expanding and unstoppable empire. Combating this gigantic army was a combined force of just over 10,000 Greek hoplites, the elite warriors of the nations' city-states.

On paper, this discrepancy in numbers between the two forces makes the outcome seem a forgone conclusion, but for three days of fierce fighting it was not so, with the Greeks, led by Leonidas, holding Xerxes' Persian army. Thermopylae, which translates as the 'Hot Gates', is a narrow coastal pass leading from the Malian Gulf to mainland Greece. It is also – and this was crucial – the only main entrance through which a large army could pass. The Greeks knew this and, after realising that Xerxes was to land there, dispatched Leonidas and their defensive force to intercept and hold him in the pass of the Hot Gates while the Athenian navy combated the accompanying Persian fleet.

That naval engagement was the Battle of Artemisium, a planned tactical ambush of the Persian fleet at the Straits of Artemisium that – like Leonidas' defence of the Hot Gates – was chosen by the Athenian general Themistocles, as it would effectively multiply the effectiveness of the 270-ship strong Greek navy against their significantly larger counterparts. Indeed, as the Persians outnumbered the Greeks on land, so too did they at sea, with the Persian fleet totalling over 800 ships in all. In fact, when Xerxes set sail for Greece, the fleet originally numbered over 1,200 ships, however after getting caught in a fierce storm off the coast of Magnesia, that number was reduced by a third, with thousands of Persians drowning at sea.

The remaining Persian fleet therefore approached Artemisium towards the end of summer depleted, but still with four times the ships of the combined might of the Greek city-states. After sailing directly into the straits, however, they were violently ambushed. And so began what would end up being one of the most epic three-day naval battles in all of history. At first, the combination of the Greek navy's tactics, such as preventing Persian flanking manoeuvres with a novel flared-crescent formation, used the element of surprise to negate the Persians' superior seamanship, with 30 ships of their fleet sent on their way to the bottom of the ocean with minimal Greek losses. In fact, these casualties, on top of the poor state of some of their surviving fleet after the Magnesia storm, meant that the start of the second day of the battle contained minimal activity, with the Persians hanging back in order to make much-needed repairs.

The Greek navy exploited this inactivity on the afternoon of the second day by hunting down a Persian patrol fleet and destroying them totally, with news of the losses quickly spreading throughout the Persian navy. Angered by their losses and now repositioned to best counter the Greeks, the Persians then attacked with full force on the morning of the third day of the battle, with hundreds of ships smashing into the Greek naval lines in a countering semi-circle formation. Now at liberty to display their superior nautical skills, the Persian sailors soon started to get a grip on the battle, with significant losses inflicted in an inferno of Greek and Persian fire. As the flames licked higher throughout the third day, all attempts at tactical positioning were rendered futile, with a marine melee ensuring that by the time night fell and the two fleets had disengaged, over 200 Persian ships and 100 Greek ships had fallen to Poseidon's domain.

So far the Persian fleet had been checked. However, this came at a great cost, with over a third of the Greek navy being destroyed in battle. The Straits had been successfully held though – just like the Hot Gates needed to be held by Leonidas.

Across the sea from the war-weary Greek navy, the main event was about to get underway. Just like at Artemisium, the Greek plan was simple yet – they hoped – beautifully effective. By forcing Xerxes' forces into the narrow pass, their superior numbers could be rendered obsolete, with only a set number of them capable of engaging Leonidas' Spartans et al at one time. Indeed, this tactic acted as a force multiplier for the Greeks, and led to one of the most famous military defences of all time, with Leonidas claiming tens of thousands of Persian lives with just the loss of 2,000 Greeks (for a comprehensive step-by-step account of the battle, see the annotated map on page 67).

"Xerxes rose from his throne three times during the slaughter of his first wave"

SPARTAN WARRIOR V



Helmet
As typical of Greek hoplites at the time, Spartan warriors wore a sturdy metal helmet in battle. The lightweight Chalcidian variety as seen here was very common. The crest colour and design varied between the forces of the Greek city states.

Breastplate
Both linen and metal breastplates were worn, with the higher ranking Spartan warriors wearing very ornate bronze examples. Here, the warrior is wearing a linothorax, a linen variety popular in Greek forces at the time of the invasion.

Spear
The primary weapon of any hoplite was a 2.5-metre long (eight foot), 2.54-centimetre (one inch) diameter spear or lance. These were typically tipped with a leaf-shaped blade on one end and a short spike on the other, things that the Spartans made much use of at the Hot Gates, claiming thousands of Persian lives.

Sword
All Greek hoplites also carried a short sword called a xiphos, and this was none more true than with the war-loving Spartans. This was a secondary weapon to be used only when the primary was lost/damaged or a phalanx had broken ranks. These swords had blades of roughly 0.6 metres (two foot) in length.

Shield
The shield was called an aspis, and consisted of a concave circle of bronze-coated wood that measured one metre (3.3 feet) in diameter. These shields were equipped with a grip that maximised soldier mobility. By interlocking these shields, Spartan warriors could repel arrow bombardment and infantry charges.

Greaves
Metal greaves were common among the hoplites, with the pieces of armour hammered out of iron or bronze sheets. They stretched from the top of the foot to the knee, with a circular dome of metal covering the front of the joint.

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PERSIAN IMMORTAL



Headdress
Unlike the sturdy metal helmets worn by the Greeks at Thermopylae, the Persian Immortals wore a tiara-style headdress. This was made from cloth and felt and could be pulled down from the crown around the face to prevent dust from clouding their vision while in battle or on arid terrain.

Short bow
A weapon for which the average Spartan warrior had no use, the Immortals carried a short bow and arrow quiver on their backs. This granted them a flexibility to alter their combat range quickly, switching from hand-to-hand to ranged combat in the blink of an eye.

Scale armour
The Immortals came dressed in scale armour, which sat beneath an outer robe. The armour was a series of iron plates interlocked together and with a backing of cloth and leather. It provided a modest level of protection, and was primarily worn with mobility in mind.

Dagger
When spear or bow was of no use, the Immortals favoured a large dagger over a short sword. These were worn off the robe at waist level, and were heavily curved. Their hilts were often ornate, with more important soldiers having precious metals or jewels inlaid into them.

Wicker shield
The Immortals carried an oval-shaped shield made from wicker. Overall, these shields offered less protection than their Greek counterparts, although they were still formidable defensive barriers, with only the strongest of spear thrusts capable of rending them in two. More important officers often carried shields with silver or gold rims.

Short spear
Unlike the Spartan warriors that met them at the Hot Gates of Thermopylae, the Immortals were armed with a much shorter spear. This was their primary weapon, and each was tipped with silver or gold counterbalances to differentiate their rank. The shortness of the spear gave mobility at the cost of reach.

The amount of damage Leonidas managed to inflict with his elite Spartan warriors – the toughest, best-trained and most combat-savage of all Greek warriors – was immense and cannot be understated. Leading the defence of the Greek shield wall, these Spartans earned their passage to the afterlife with a combat prowess loaded with a lifetime's gathering of hatred, blood and skull-crushing steel, impaling, cleaving, rending and splitting Persian bone and body in a series of actions akin to those of the demon-minions of Hades, the Greek lord of hell. The Persians who were sent against this wall of hatred were not just checked, but totally obliterated, their corpses stacked in a grotesque barrier to Xerxes' progress.

Despite the wrath of Sparta being unleashed, for Leonidas and a brave rear-guard force of around 1,000 Greeks, the Battle of Thermopylae ended in death, with the warrior-king famously betrayed by one of his own. However, he and his men's actions and sacrifice acted as a catalyst to the remaining Greek forces. It united the typically unruly, warring and independent city states in the defence of their country, showing that the Persians were not unbeatable and that their infamous Immortals, supposedly unkillable elite warriors, could indeed bleed and pass screaming into the Persian underworld of Duzakh.

Greek scouts, retreating along with the bulk of Leonidas' force, immediately relayed the failure to hold the Gates not just to the surviving Greek navy, but also to every city-state in Greece, leading to the evacuation of many, including the capital city of Athens. Themistocles, learning of the failure to hold the Gates, quickly ordered the waters of Artemisium to be evacuated forthwith, realising that without the Gates their defence of the Straits was futile. As such, on the fourth day of the Battle of Artemisium the Greek navy retreated north to the Straits of Salamis in an attempt to regroup and replan. Despite the heroic efforts of Leonidas, his Spartans and the thousands of Greek soldiers who had fought to repel the Persians all now seemed for nothing. As history shows, however, the Greeks were down, but not out.

Following the events of Thermopylae, Xerxes' troops made some headway into Greece – even taking and ramsacking Athens itself – but a month later his fleet was trapped at Salamis by the Greeks, where it was left severely depleted after a combined naval assault. This left Xerxes with insufficient ships, men and crucially the will to continue the conquest, and they were forced to retreat back to Asia. By the time the Persian king's force had returned to their homeland, almost all of his once colossal army had died of sickness or starvation, and so the invasion of the largest military force the world had ever seen had been repelled. A few more battles between the Greeks and Persians followed, but the East's expansion into the West had been fatally hindered by Thermopylae – and Sparta, the city state that led the resistance, remained a beacon of what can be achieved if ideals are chased and never compromised.

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THE NIGHT

While total war brought women into factories and farms in the US and Britain, in Soviet Russia they took to the skies to defend their motherland

Written by James Hoare

Nadezhda 'Nadia' Popova was just shy of her 20th birthday when her brother was killed, and the Gestapo ejected her family from their home near Donetsk in Ukraine, smashed the windows and chopped down the cherry trees. A member of one of the Soviet Union's numerous flying clubs – aviation was one of the many symbols of modernity and dynamism that gripped the imagination of communist society – since she was 15 years-old (she hadn't told her parents), Nadia had completed her first solo flight and her first parachute jump aged 16. As soon as war was declared she abandoned the dress she was ironing and rushed to the airfield to enlist, but it would only be October 1941 – four months of heartbreak later – that her offer would be accepted.

She would become part of a unit – a squadron leader, no less – that flew up to 30,000 missions and dropped an estimated 23,000 tons of bombs, outfoxed the growling Messerschmitt fighters of the Luftwaffe with the most primitive of planes and struck fear into the hearts of the most feared fighting force of the 20th Century. She lost 30 comrades in action, and would be one of the 23 women of her regiment awarded the nation's highest honour – the gold star and red ribbon of the Hero of the Soviet Union, along with the Order of Lenin and three Orders of the Patriotic War. By 1945, this incredible young woman from the coal fields of eastern Ukraine would write her name in pencil on the wall of Reichstag in Berlin, the red flag of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics fluttering victoriously through the smoke and booming artillery as Hitler's empire finally died.

Nadezhda Popova was a Night Witch, and institutionalised disdain was as implacable an opponent as the Nazi aggressors she lined up in her sights.

In June 1941 the Wehrmacht ground a murderous trail across the vast unprepared expanse of the Soviet Union; Operation Barbarossa was well underway. Hitler's plan to seize vast swathes of fertile Belorusian farmland, Ukrainian oil fields and Russian industrial centres had taken Soviet despot Joseph Stalin by surprise. Stalin had absolute faith in 1939's Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which defined the spheres of influence between the obviously incompatible superpowers.

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WITCHES

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Germany's Nazi regime nursed a pathological hatred of communists, Jews and Eastern Europe's Slavic peoples which they believed to be racially inferior to Germanic 'Aryans', and millions of Slavs were to be murdered or deported to make way for German settlers. More than a war of conquest, this was, in the Fuhrer's own words, a "war of annihilation" that transformed Europe's eastern fringe into a great and terrible charnel house. Steeling the will of his commanders, Hitler reminded them in a secret briefing, "This struggle is one of ideologies and racial differences and will have to be conducted with unprecedented, unmerciful, and unrelenting harshness."

The unprepared Red Army was overrun, and by October 1941 the swastika was flying over Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, and Ukraine.

"Lenin left us a great estate and we made s**t out of it," Stalin reflected later in the war.

Despite the number of women prepared to fight or fly to defend their homeland and avenge their loved ones, and the supposed egalitarianism of communist society, women were refused combat roles. One young woman, eager to serve, recalled a recruiting officer telling her, "Things may be bad but we're not so desperate that we're going to put little girls like you up in the skies. Go home and help your mother."

It would take a personal plea to Stalin from Marina Raskova – "Russia's Amelia Earhart," according to the international press – for the situation to change. Raskova, who was 29 when war broke out, was one of the Soviet Union's most famous aviators. In 1933 she became the first female navigator in the Soviet Air Force, became the first woman to teach at Zhukovsky Air Academy in 1934 – instructing male navigators who were initially sceptical of her abilities – and achieved celebrity status in 1938 when the 26 year-old Raskova, along with two other women, broke the record for a women's straight-line flight, travelling non-stop for over 5,900 kilometers (3660 miles) for Moscow to Komsomolsk in the Soviet Far East – bailing out with her parachute when they couldn't find the landing strip, Raskova spent ten days lost in the dense swampy taiga with no food, survival equipment or water. Unsurprisingly, they were proclaimed Heroes of the Soviet Union on their return and toasted by Stalin who declared that "Today these three women have avenged the heavy centuries of oppression of women."

How could he resist her after that?

"She said to Stalin, 'You know, they are running away to the front all the same,'" recalled one of her future comrades-in-arms, Yevgeniya Zhigulenko after the war. "It will be worse, you understand, if they steal airplanes to go...'"

With Stalin's blessing Raskova formed and trained the 586th Fighter Aviation Regiment, flying Yakovlev Yak-1, Yak-7B and Yak-9 fighters, Raskova's own 125th Guards Bomber Aviation Regiment which flew state-of-the-art Petlyakov Pe-2 dive bombers, much to the envy of male bomber regiments, and arguably the most famous of the lot – the 588th Night Bomber Regiment. Later renamed 46th 'Taman' Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment, it would become better known by the name given to it by its German enemies – die Nachthexen, or the Night Witches, as they would idle the engines and drop through the clouds at a glide to bomb German units in near-silence, with only a broomstick-like rustling of the canvas body to give them away. Specialists in precision bombing of supply depots and command



Marina Raskova (first right) and her co-pilots in 1938, right before their record breaking flight to Kosomolsk



Lydia Litvyak (left) plots her route with her colleagues on the tail of one of their regiment's Yak-1 fighters in 1942



Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes being flown before the war

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Clad in her Air Force dress uniform, Nadezhda Popova (second right) and her comrades pour over a magazine in 1945

centres, and 'harassment bombing', in which the Night Witches' role was to keep the enemy on edge, unable to sleep or rest without fear of death from the skies at any time.

"We flew in sequence," recalled Nadia Popova in a 2009 interview for PRI's 'The World'. "One after another, and during the night we never let them rest so they called us 'Night Witches.' And the Germans made up stories. They spread the rumour that we had been injected with some unknown chemicals that enabled us to see so clearly at night."

"They would have to run out into the night in their underwear, and they were probably saying, 'Oh, those night witches!'" said Galina Brok-Beltsova, who flew with the Night Witches' sister regiment the 125th, in a 1996 issue of *FAA Aviation News*. "Or maybe they called us something worse. We, of course, would have preferred to have been called 'night beauties,' but, whichever, we did our job."

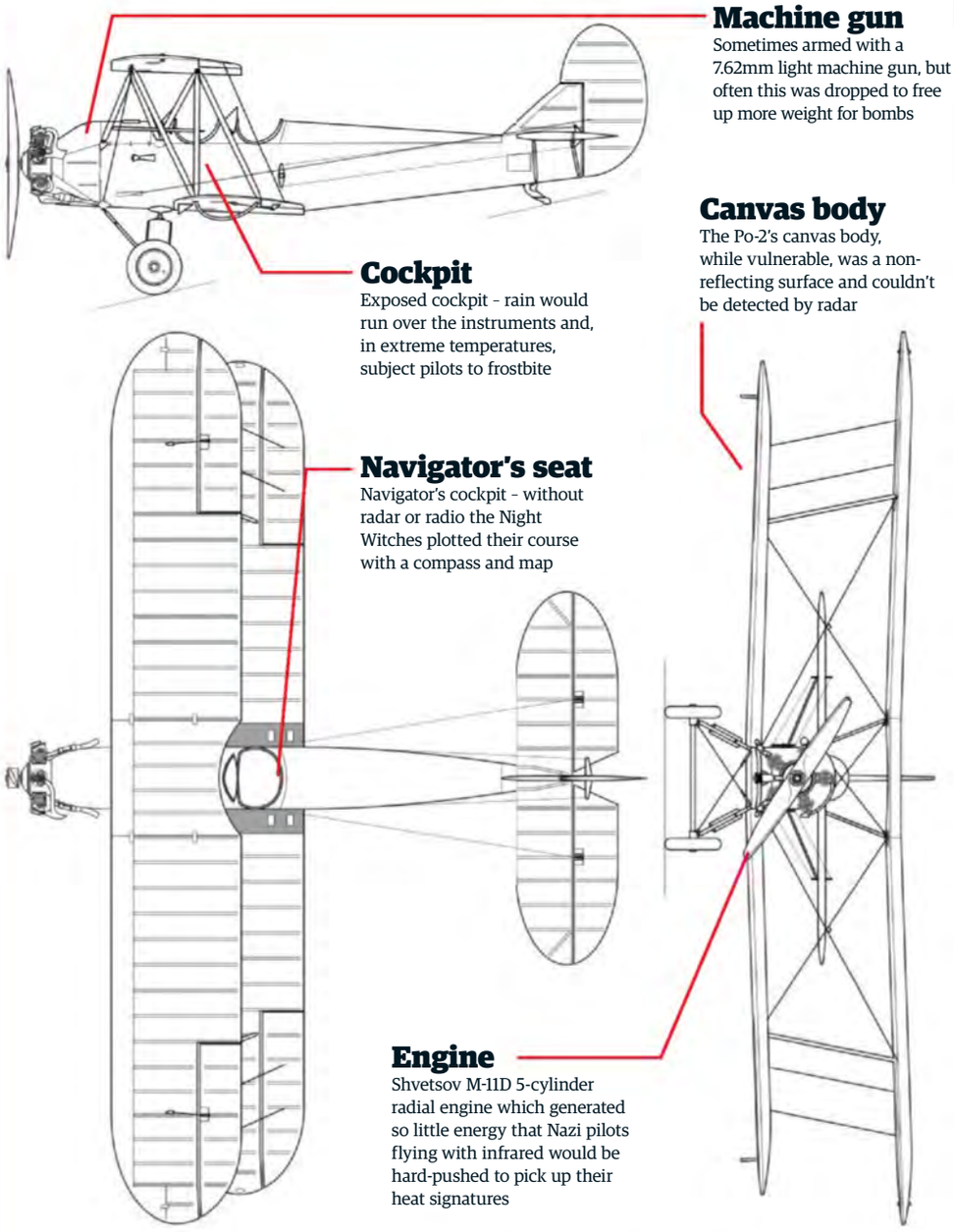
So unnerved were the enemy that many refused to smoke at night, lest the glow of their cigarettes reveal their positions, and an Iron Cross – the highest military honour awarded to German soldiers – would be issued to anyone who brought down a Night Witch.

They used wood-frame Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes – mockingly referred to as 'sewing machines' – that first saw service in 1928 and had since been relegated to crop-dusting and training. The Po-2's open cockpit exposed the pilot and navigator to frostbite, the small carrying capacity meant their two bombs were at the expense of even a radio and often a light machine gun, and so to keep up constant pressure on the Nazis were forced to fly over and over again – Popova's record was 18 gruelling sorties in one night. With an all-female ground crew as well as pilots, they moved from airbases behind Soviet lines to temporary airfields closer to the front and, as night fell, they deployed on their seemingly neverending missions from Popova's native Donetsk Basin to the besieged Crimea, to Belarus and Poland, and eventually even Germany itself, with planes landing and taking off three minutes apart. Always on the move and always in action, each Night Witch would fly around 1,000 missions by the end of the war when the average for a British bomber crew was 30.

All this discomfort was nothing compared to the

THE WITCHES' BROOM

Close up on the Night Witches' infamous Polikarpov Po-2 'sewing machine' dive bomber



Machine gun
Sometimes armed with a 7.62mm light machine gun, but often this was dropped to free up more weight for bombs

Canvas body
The Po-2's canvas body, while vulnerable, was a non-reflecting surface and couldn't be detected by radar

Cockpit
Exposed cockpit – rain would run over the instruments and, in extreme temperatures, subject pilots to frostbite

Navigator's seat
Navigator's cockpit – without radar or radio the Night Witches plotted their course with a compass and map

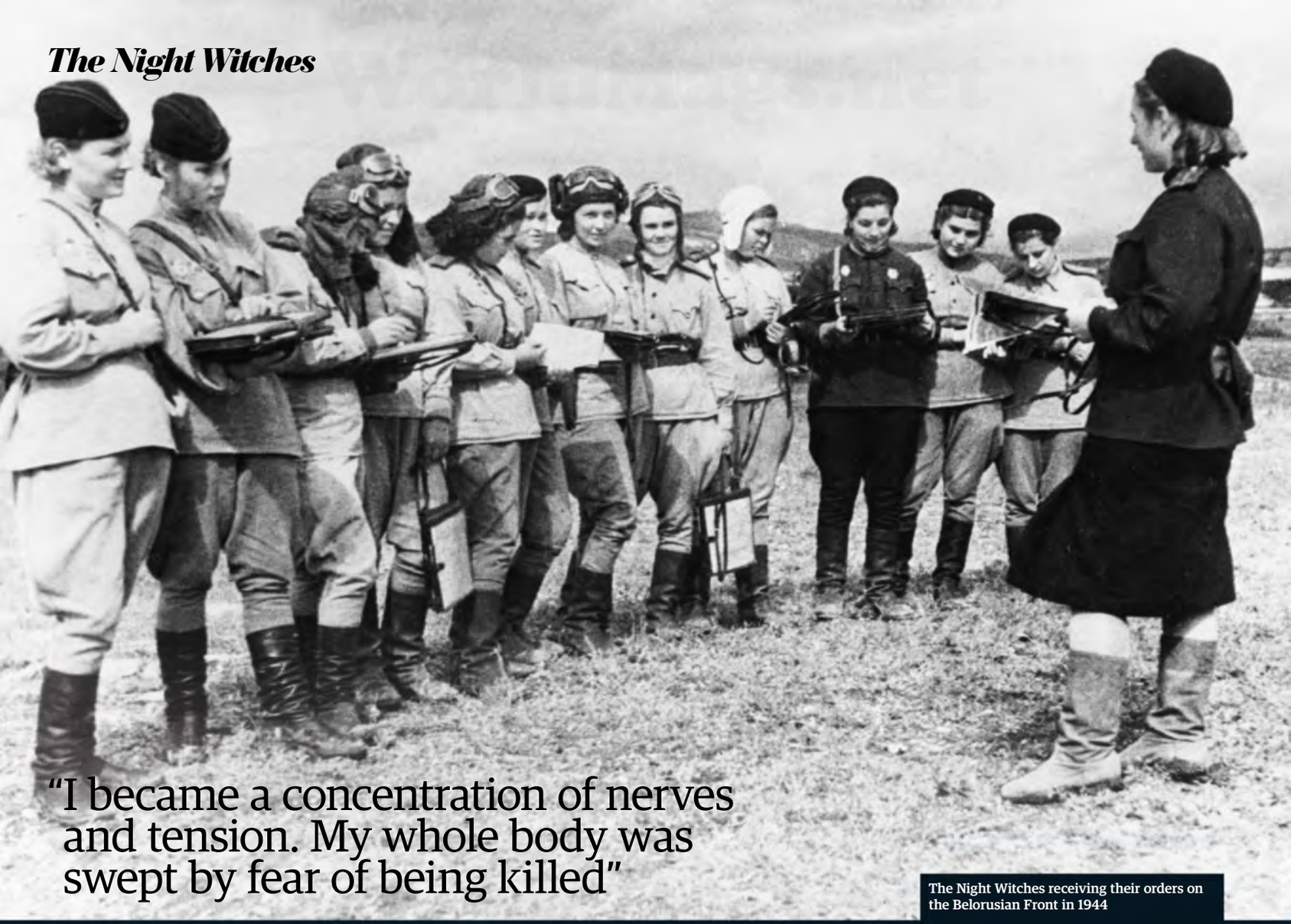
Engine
Shvetsov M-11D 5-cylinder radial engine which generated so little energy that Nazi pilots flying with infrared would be hard-pushed to pick up their heat signatures

THE LUFTWAFFE

Model - Focke-Wulf 190
Entered combat - 1941
Max speed - 426 mph
Max altitude - 40,000 feet
Weapons -
2X 13 mm machine guns
2X 20 mm cannons



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"I became a concentration of nerves and tension. My whole body was swept by fear of being killed"

The Night Witches receiving their orders on the Belorusian Front in 1944

incredible dangers posed by their obsolete biplanes which flew too low to bail out of, and would burst into to flames with sickening ease when hit by tracer shells from the 'circus of flak' – the rings of wicked 37mm anti-aircraft guns pointed skyward, guided by searchlights whose touch often meant death. To combat the searchlights the Night Witches developed a strategy that tested their already beleaguered nerves, flying in groups of three, the first two planes would deliberately probe the circus until they had the attention of the searchlights and their accompanying symphony of gunfire, allowing the third plane to dip in and deliver its payload.

"We were flying without parachutes," said Popova. "We were not able to bail out. The whole crew which was shot during the night flight was burning alive, and it was awful. It was an absolutely unbearable sight. This was the most tragic part."

"You shouldn't misinterpret my words and think we faced death openly and bravely – it is not true," said Mariya Smirnova, one of the unit's most decorated pilots. "We never became accustomed to fear. Before each mission and as we approached the target, I became a concentration of nerves and tension. My whole body was swept by fear of being killed."

With a top speed of around 151 kilometres per hour (94 miles per hour) when fully loaded, this was well below the speed at which the engines of the Luftwaffe's infamous Messerschmitt Bf 109 and Focke-Wulf Fw 190 fighters would stall, making the Polikarpov Po-2 too slow and nimbly manoeuvrable to effectively engage in air combat – often dropping out of sight in the darkness by the time the German fighters had turned back around. Eventually the Germans were forced to start deploying their own mothballed biplanes to counter them. As advantages go, having a plane too clunky to dogfight was scarcely a fair trade for their vulnerability or the punishing frequency of their deployment, nor to the standard by which they were held by male airmen when they first deployed. Though the Night Witches were eventually awarded the coveted 'Guards Regiment' status, along with the variety of battle honours and medals they had rightfully earned, the prejudices that kept women out of combat until Operation Barbarossa reached its height weren't easily dispelled.

Clad in poorly fitting second-hand uniforms cast aside by male pilots, oversized boots stuffed with newspaper and given two years' training in only six months, Comrade Stalin may have held Marina Raskova in some regard, but to many male airmen and officers, these 20-somethings were nothing more than the 'skirt regiment.' Some male pilots refused to let their planes be maintained by female ground crews, and officers made disparaging reports of airwomen colouring in their lips with navigation pencil used to mark routes on maps, dancing on the airfield and keeping kittens in their barrack.

"What an exceptional case!" read one official report. "A regiment composed solely of girls! And what's more, these girls were eager to fight! But, after all, they were bound to become scared and cry! Besides – the crux of the matter was – could they fight?"

They could and they did, and amazingly the Soviet Union's female flyers managed this without sacrificing their femininity. While well aware that they were being held to the same – if not higher – standards of male pilots, the motto of the 588th was "You are a woman, and you should be proud of that."

Nobody exemplifies this better than the 'White Rose of Stalingrad', Lydia Litvyak, a pilot with one of the Night Witches' sister regiments. The world's first female fighter ace – a title awarded for a certain number of enemy kills, usually around five – she was reported to have painted a white rose on the nose of her Yak-1 fighter and kept bouquets

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MAGNIFICENT FEMALE FLYING ACES

The other female flyers that took to the war-torn skies of the Thirties and Forties

THE WOMEN OF THE ATA (UK)
Originally set up to fly mail and medical supplies in 1940, with the demand for pilots flying military duties the Air Transport Auxiliary began to ferry planes from factories to airfields. Over 160 women from Britain and the Commonwealth (plus volunteers from other nations) would fly everything from the Spitfire to the B-25 Mitchell, and by 1943 their pay would be placed in line with their male counterparts. Credited with a vital role in the Battle Of Britain, 15 would be killed in service, including pioneering aviatrix Amy Johnson – the first woman to fly from England to Australia – who crashed into the Thames Estuary.

THE WASPS (USA)
With male pilots needed at the front the Women Airforce Service Pilots was formed in 1942 and, like the two earlier organisations it replaced, ferried planes around the US, but also transported cargo, towed targets in live fire exercises and a few even tested the new generation of rocket and jet-powered fighters for the US Air Force. Rather wonderfully WASP's winged munchkin mascot, the gremlin Fifinella, was invented by children's author Roald Dahl and drawn by founding father of feature-length animation Walt Disney. 1,074 women would serve in total and, although they never saw combat, 38 died in accidents.

SABIHA GÖKÇEN (TURKEY)
Lydia Litvyak may have been the first female fighter ace in history, but in 1936 Sabiha Gökçen became the world's first female fighter pilot. Adopted by Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk when she was 12 years old, Sabiha became captivated by an airshow ten years later. Upon telling her adopted father that she wanted to become a pilot, Atatürk enrolled her as the Turkish Airforce's first female trainee. Though combat missions were rare (32 hours in all), she nonetheless flew 22 different types of aircraft and racked up a notable 8,000 hours in the air during her career.







of wildflowers in the cockpit, dyed her hair with peroxide obtained from the nearest hospital and would make scarves out of parachute material.

Nadia Popova similarly never forgot the motto of the 588th – despite the rigours of war, she would fluff up her hair – pressed flat by the leather flying cap – in a tortoiseshell mirror after each flight, and would eventually meet her future husband – pilot Semyon Kharlamov – in a convoy, after being shot down and separated from her unit. When Popova ended the war in the ruins of the Reichstag, Semyon was by her side, and they wrote their names together on the crumbling walls.

Like so many of Popova's contemporaries, Marina Raskova and Lydia Litvyak died in combat – Raskova in 1943, crashing into the banks of the Volga river in a violent snow-storm, and Litvyak later the same year, ambushed by Messerschmitts while she attacked a German bomber. She was only 21.

Popova survived, married, and returned to her home town a hero, greeted by crowds throwing flowers and a marching band – a more triumphant and provincial echo of Marina Raskova's state funeral in Moscow; the first the Soviet Union had given in wartime and a tribute to her status.



A Polikarpov Po-2, similar to that used by the Night Witches, being flown by partisans in

Despite the glory and the tragedy, the 588th and its sister regiments would be sadly disbanded and, much like in Britain and America, the role of women who had served their country every bit as faithfully and bravely as their husbands, fathers and brothers was expected to return to its pre-war setting. While many of them were forced to return home and become housewives – their deeds largely unremarked upon until the Eighties when the old authoritarian Russian regime began to crumble and the Europe bequeathed by Joseph Stalin was finally dismantled – Nadia Popova continued to work as a flight instructor, and when she died on 8 July 2013, aged 91, her death was mourned not just in her native Russia, but around the world.

History provides few enough examples of women being able to endure the same terrible hardships and perform the same incredible feats as men, and fewer still exist where they were allowed to accomplish these things on their own terms – as women. These 20-something girls from collective farms and steel towns defied society once when they became pilots, and then defied it again when they abandoned their ironing and took to the skies in war, and their example in an era when the idea of women in combat roles is still contested defies it once more. Throughout it all they never forgot, "You are a woman, and you should be proud of that."

"At night sometimes," Popova recalled. "I look up into the dark sky, close my eyes and picture myself as a girl at the controls of my bomber and I think, 'Nadia, how on earth did you do it?'"

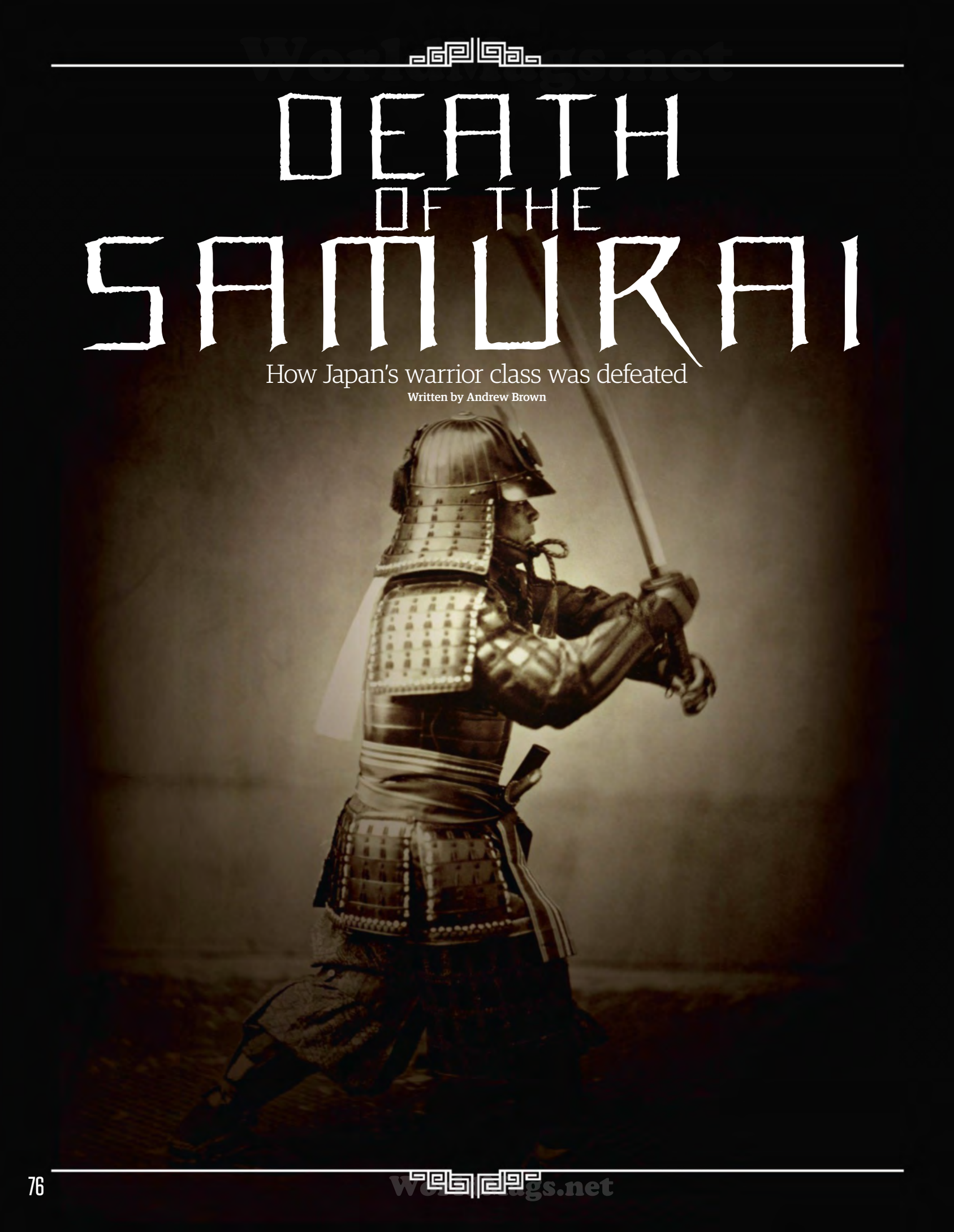
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DEATH OF THE SAMURAI

How Japan's warrior class was defeated

Written by Andrew Brown



As the Sun crept over the mountains, only 40 samurai rebels felt its warmth touch them – the rest of their group had been killed over the previous months in a series of battles. Saigo Takamori, the leader of the rogue group of samurai, and formally a highly respected field marshal in the Imperial army, had been wounded in his leg and stomach during the fighting and so beseeched his friend, Beppu Shinsuke, to carry him to a quiet spot. Once there he committed seppuku – a form of suicide by disembowelment practiced by the samurai, which was considered an honourable way to die. With their leader dead and a force of around 30,000 Imperial forces commanded by General Yamagata and his technologically advanced weaponry close by, there seemed little hope for the warriors that for centuries had played a prominent role in Japanese society. Rather than suffer the shame of surrender, Beppu Shinsuke gathered the remaining samurai and led them – brandishing their swords fiercely – on a suicidal charge against the Imperial forces. The Gatling guns barked in the early morning air and cut the doomed men charging straight at them to pieces. The era of the samurai had thereby ended in a brutal yet emphatically memorable fashion.

For much of the previous 1,000 years it would have been unthinkable that the samurai would cease to exist as they had played such an important and vital role in Japanese society and seemed ingrained in the fabric of the country. However, the world in which the samurai lived was changing. Advances in technology aligned with Japan ending its isolationist ways and opening trade routes – and with it an exchange of knowledge and culture – signalled the beginning of the end for a proud warrior caste that did not want to, or see why it should, change its ways. In a world in which immense firepower from Gatling guns existed, pumping out an almost continuous stream of murderous bullets, and ships that could fire artillery on a town from a safe distance, were the samurai really such a valuable commodity anymore?

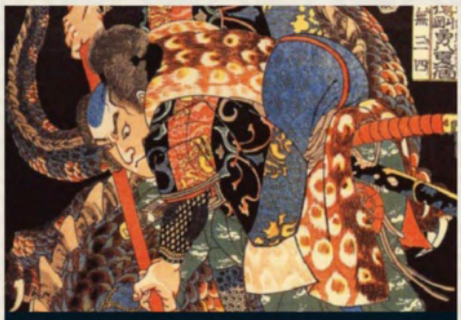
Although samurai developed a complex code of honour, rituals and ethics (Bushido) that meant being a samurai was a whole way of life, they originally came into existence and then prominence through their fighting skills. In 646CE the Taika reforms in Japan led to the country being dominated by a handful of large landowners and created a feudal system similar to that of medieval Europe. These large landowners needed their land to be protected from those who would take their crops or land. In this lied the origins of the samurai, as the men hired to provide protection slowly began to develop a code. After a succession of weak emperors, the Heian Dynasty began to lose control of the country and the warriors began to move into the power gap created. By 1100CE they held significant military and political power over the land.

This ushered in a golden period for the samurai and throughout the next centuries until the end of the Edo period (1603-1868CE) this warrior class was at the heart of Japanese life, as rival clans battled each other for control of the country and dominance. The Edo period saw greater peace and stability that meant many samurai were not needed for combat and so became teachers and members of government. Despite the decline in use of the samurai, they were still revered in society and were the only class allowed to carry swords, which was a mark of their rank. This period of peace may have reduced the key role of samurai in Japanese society, but it was nothing compared to what was to come. The world was experiencing political and social revolutions and against it a bow and arrow or a sword would be unable to hold back the tide of change that was washing in.

For Japan, this change began when in 1853 Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States entered Edo Bay (Tokyo Bay) to seek trade links. Japan had previously adopted an isolationist position, but some of the country's political elite began to realise that their country was lagging behind other nations in terms of technology – Japan had not industrialised – and modernisation was key

> "In a world in which immense firepower from Gatling guns existed... were the samurai really such a valuable commodity anymore?"

THREE LEGENDARY SAMURAI



A fantastical illustration of Miyamoto Musashi slaying a giant creature

Miyamoto Musashi

It is believed that Musashi fought over 60 duels without loss and is credited with creating the two-sword fighting technique Nitoryu, where both a standard large sword and a smaller one are used. He began formal sword training very young and one of the books he wrote declares that he fought his first duel aged 13. Musahi was a skilled writer and painter and his text, *The Book of Five Rings*, covering martial arts and kenjutsu is still read to this day.



A 19th-century, Edo-period, woodblock print depicting Minamoto Tametomo

Minamoto Tametomo

Samurai weren't just deadly swordsmen – many were also highly skilled with a bow and arrow and Tametomo was one of the best proponents of this. Supposedly he was born with a left arm six inches longer than his right, meaning he could generate greater power on his shots by drawing the bowstring further back. The great bowman committed seppuku in 1170CE after he was captured during battle and the tendons in his left arm were severed, thus rendering him useless as an archer.



Saigo Takamori was the leader of what is held to be the last stand of the samurai

Saigo Takamori

Although he is famous for leading the revolt against the Imperial army, Takamori actually had a part in establishing the new government as in 1867CE his troops supported the Emperor in the Meiji restoration and he was Imperial advisor to the new government. He became disillusioned with what he saw as the country's Westernisation, failure to invade Korea and the dismissing of samurai importance, so he eventually led a doomed revolt against the Imperial forces.

BUSHIDO – THE WARRIOR CODE

Loyalty

忠義

Samurai developed in feudal Japan where they were employed by large landowners to protect their territory. Samurai were famously loyal to their masters and were expected to show complete obedience to them.

Integrity

義

One of the most important elements in the code – many samurai believed that without this the rest of the code would fall apart. Integrity is doing what the samurai believes is right without wavering, no mater what.

Courage

勇

Samurai were expected to show courage at all times and to commit seppuku to avoid capture. If they were in a position on the battlefield where they could not help their side, they were also expected to take their own life.

Mercy

仁

Samurai had the power of life and death in their hands –w if they felt that a peasant had offended their honour, even if they hadn't, they had the right to kill them. With such power mercy is an important part of the warrior code.

Respect

礼

Politeness and courtesy were a large part of samurai life and they were expected to show both to fellow samurai, as well as to their masters and superiors. Failure to adhere to this tenet was a risky and often lethal business.

Honour

名誉

Fear of disgrace hung over the head of all samurai. Any loss of honour often resulted in long and deadly blood feuds between rival factions. In many cases, committing ritual seppuku was the only honourable option left.

Honesty

真

It was held that true samurai disdained money and that having wealth led to luxury, which was seen as a menace to manhood. The Confucian philosophy of the samurai dictated that simplicity was the only way of the warrior.

in order to compete with other world powers. At this point Japan was still, in practice, ruled by an emperor, but the real power resided with the shogun. Understanding that the country needed drastic change, two daimyos (powerful territorial lords) formed an alliance against the ruling shogun and aimed to give the Emperor genuine power. The ruling shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu resigned from his position but had no intention of giving up real power and when Emperor Meiji issued an Imperial decree dissolving his house, he sent his samurai army to the Imperial city of Kyoto with the aim of deposing the emperor.

As swords from the two opposing factions clashed and clinked in battle, the fate of the country hung in the balance. The battle of Toba-Fushimi on January 27 1868CE ended in defeat for the shogun and lit the touch paper for the Boshin war that lasted until May 1869CE. The war followed the same path as the battle and the Emperor, with more-modern weaponry and tactics, prevailed. With victory secured, the young Emperor – allegedly influenced by his advisors – began the process of reshaping Japan. Social reforms such as universal elementary education for children were introduced, as was investment in heavy machinery to breathe new life into their manufacturing industry. There was also a focus on Westernisation, with an edict issued in 1871CE encouraging the adoption of Western-style clothing and food. Arguably the biggest change that affected the samurai though was the forming of a modern conscript army, which meant that their role as the primary fighting men in the country was disappearing and that they were not the only strata of society allowed to bear weapons. These new weapons – guns and rifles – required much less skill to operate than those of the samurai and meant that a peasant with a gun could now conceivably defeat a samurai in combat.

If the implementation of a conscript army indicated that the days of the samurai were slipping away, then the next decree by the Emperor in 1876CE left no one in any doubt; samurai were banned from wearing swords. Their position as a special class had ended. Even though their position of prestige had been

"As word spread of the rebellion, samurai and peasants from across Japan flocked to join the cause"



Samurai during the Boshin war period



SAMURAI

Samurai were warriors that emerged in Japan with the appearance of the shogunate in the 12th century. Trained in the art of war, they cultivated a philosophy of life called Bushido

Social structure of feudal Japan

Japanese society was organised into clans or families who disputed over farmland

Emperor

Of divine origin, the emperor did not care much about politics or the economy



Shogun

Shogun were military leaders with political and economic power



Daimyo

Powerful court nobles who held large domains and collected ichimangoku or salaries



Samurai

In service to a daimyo, samurai owed him absolute obedience and loyalty



Craftsmen, villagers, merchants

Under the protection of a daimyo



Ronin

Wandering, masterless samurai who were often dishonoured and outcast from society



The warrior

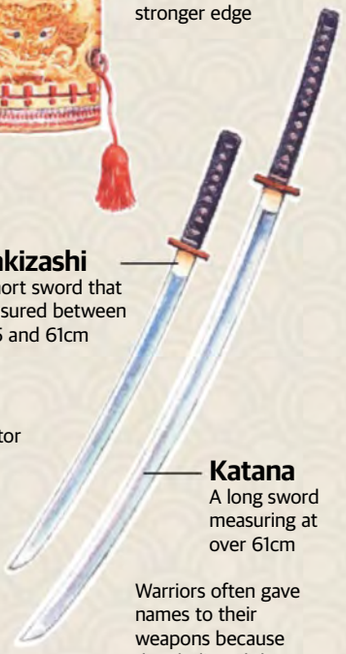
His aim was to achieve an heroic death in battle

Weapons

Each warrior wore two swords as a symbol of distinction of their samurai caste



Swords were initially straight. Later the curved shape was preferred, in the search for an even stronger edge



Wakizashi

A short sword that measured between 30.5 and 61cm

Katana

A long sword measuring at over 61cm

Warriors often gave names to their weapons because they believed they were the soul of their fighting capacity



Kabuto

Crash helmet of iron

Mempo

Protective masks painted with fierce faces were used to frighten the enemy

Yodare-kake

Throat protection

Sode

Shoulder protector

Do

Breastplate which allowed large and free movements

Kote

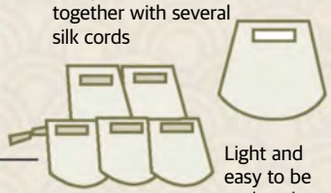
Arm protector

Tekko

Hand protector

Kusari

Kusari protected the upper thigh and was made from lacquered iron plates connected together with several silk cords



Light and easy to be replaced

Haidate

Haidate protected the lower part of the thigh and was worn under the kusazuri



Suneate

Made from leather and cloth, suneate were tied with cords around the calves to protect them

Sandals

Bushido code

Bushido means 'way of the warrior-knight' and required an almost religious dedication to military life. This code set moral standards and behavioural patterns

Seppuku

Only samurai carried out this ritual suicide in preference to a dishonorable death



Samurai cut their own stomach and then a trusted friend cut off their heads

in steadily decline, for many samurai this was the final insult. The Japanese leaders felt they needed to modernise to avoid being left behind and the samurai were simply one of the casualties of war; the government believed that in their current form they belonged to a different era and had no relevance in this new Japan they were forging.

There were some samurai that adapted to this modernisation process and, for the good of the country, abandoned their old beliefs and tried to put themselves at the forefront of this new Japan. The government instigated a programme to rehabilitate samurai, help them find employment and try to place them at the head of enterprises, as they were more educated than the majority of the population. However, a group of samurai decided that the country was changing too fast and losing its culture and traditions. They were led by Saigo Takamori and decided to take a stand.

Saigo Takamori was a great bear of a man who stood nearly six-feet tall with a stout and sturdy frame. Born the son of a low-ranking samurai he had previously fallen into disgrace following the death of his lord and had been banned to a remote island, but was later readmitted to a daimyo's army and regained his honour. He had played a prominent role in the setting up of the new Meiji government and in 1871CE was even left in charge of the caretaker government during the absence of many senior statesmen. Even though he opposed the Westernisation of the country it was actually when his proposal to invade Korea was rejected that he resigned from the government and returned to Kagoshima where he set up a local military school. He soon gathered supporters among disenchanted samurai and those harbouring ill intentions against the central government.

Takamori's footnote in history looked destined to be a minor one, as he lived out his days honouring the old samurai tradition and teaching. However, in 1877CE a group of samurai rebels raided and occupied government ammunition and weapon depots and proclaimed him as their leader. Reluctantly, he would lead the last samurai charge.

As word spread of the rebellion, samurai and peasants from across Japan flocked to join the cause and soon Takamori was in charge of 40,000 men. A good figure, but no match for the government's force of 300,000 trained in more-modern warfare and with appropriate weaponry. The rebel forces marched on the well-fortified Kumamoto Castle and, with their samurai and peasant army armed with guns, surrounded the castle. For two bloody nights the army threw itself at the walls in a ferocious attempt to scale them, but the attacks were repelled time and again by gunfire and had no co-ordinated plan for how to breach the fortifications. When a government relief force arrived and engaged with the rebels, several sharp clashes ensued before both sides retreated. The rebellion went on to last for six months and, while both sides gained victories, the government army could replenish any lost forces much easier than the rebels, who were gradually ground down by superior technological firepower, such as warships. It is estimated that the Imperial forces lost more than 6,000 troops and had 10,000 wounded, while the much smaller samurai army had 7,000 casualties and 11,000 wounded.

Following a series of engagements, the depleted rebel force sneaked into Kagoshima and took possession of a castle mountain in Shiroyma. It took the government troops several days to locate them but when they did, there was no doubt what the eventual outcome would be. Takamori organised a sake party for his closest friends, an impressive display of bloody-mindedness, as he must have known what was coming. It was to be his last night alive, as at 3.00am Imperial forces stormed the mountain castle. By the time they were repelled, only 40 of the rebels were still alive and Takamori was badly injured. Being rendered unable to fight, Takamori did what honour dictated, as did the remaining samurai who charged into the bullets of the waiting Imperial army. The age of the samurai may have been extinguished that day, but it was done so displaying all of the central tenants that had made this warrior class so legendary – honour, courage and loyalty.

"Being unable to fight, Takamori did what honour dictated, as did the remaining samurai who charged into the bullets"



Imperial officers in their Western-style uniforms accept the surrender of un-uniformed rebels

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WORLD'S WORST DICTATORS

Proof that absolute power corrupts absolutely, these ten dictators inflicted widespread suffering upon their citizens, while projecting themselves as great leaders doing what was best for their country

Written by Jonathan Hatfull






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NICOLAE CEAUSESCU

ROMANIA 1967-1989

Nicolae Ceaușescu's vision for a communist Romania would rob his citizens of their freedoms, as he forced the nation to adhere to his ideals. He joined the Romanian Communist Party as a teenager, and when it gained power following World War II, he quickly climbed the ladder before taking the leadership in 1965.

Ceaușescu gained popularity both at home and in the West when he publicly challenged Soviet influence in Romania. Away from the eyes of the rest of the world, though, Romania was a police state. He initiated brutal austerity measures despite his own incredibly lavish lifestyle with his wife Elena, and in an attempt to reverse the economic crisis, began 'systemisation.' Not dissimilar to Stalin's collectivisation, this move forcibly relocated citizens from their homes to complexes called 'agrotechnical centres', while persecuting minorities such as ethnic Hungarians.

Ceaușescu's perfect Romania had a population target, which was several million higher than it currently had. In the late 1960s, the dictator offered medals and titles such as 'Heroine Mother' to women who produced ten children. When this method failed to incentivise the poverty-stricken population, he declared abortion illegal. The birth rate doubled, but the resources to provide for these new children were simply not available, and maternity mortality tripled. Living standards also became worse and worse.

On 17 December 1989, during a demonstration in Timișoara, Ceaușescu's forces opened fire on men, women and children. Over the next few days, rebellions turned into revolution and he and his wife were captured while trying to leave the country. They were given a swift trial on Christmas day and were shot together outside of the same room they had been tried in.

POL POT

CAMBODIA 1975-1979

While many dictators used modern technology to advance their nation's status and spread their influence, Pol Pot was determined to restore Cambodia to the simplicity of an earlier time and would use any means necessary. His vision for Cambodia was called 'The Super Great Leap Forward.' Any outside influence was to be expelled as the country would revert to a Year Zero.

After taking leadership of the country's communist party, Pol Pot staged a coup on 17 April 1975. Over two million people were forcibly evacuated from Phnom Penh into the countryside and forced to work in the rice paddies. Malnutrition, exhaustion and sickness decimated Cambodia's population, while Pol Pot began purges to eradicate the educated, the wealthy, the clergy and anyone who might oppose his practices from a political or religious standpoint. A quarter of Cambodia's population perished due to Pol Pot's insane vision.

In 1979 he was forced to flee Phnom Penh when the Vietnamese defeated the Khmer Rouge, and he subsequently resigned as leader. He returned in 1989, but was finally arrested by party members in 1997 and sentenced to house arrest.



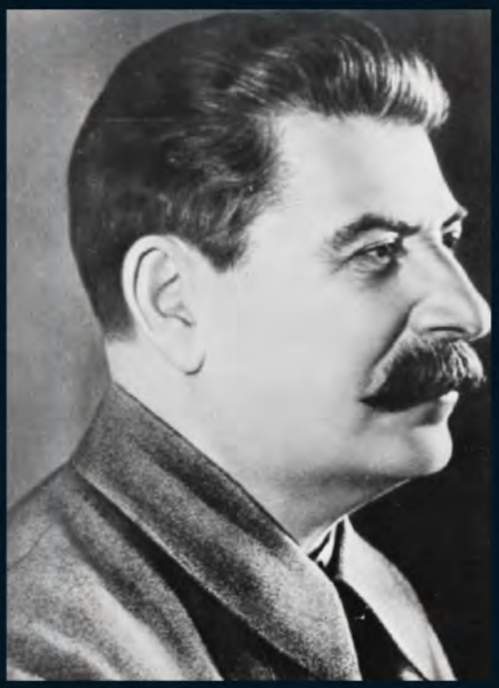
The bones of some of Pol Pot's many victims



"Pol Pot eradicated the wealthy, the clergy and anyone else who might oppose his practices"

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JOSEPH STALIN

SOVIET UNION 1924-1953

Following the death of Lenin in 1924, the brutal and uncompromising Joseph Stalin outmanoeuvred his rivals to gain total control over the Soviet Union. Aware that he was not well-liked by his colleagues, Stalin manipulated Lenin's last testament to make it seem as though he was the favoured successor and orchestrated the deaths of his closest competitors. Once in power, Stalin began legislation against enemies of the state (such as Poles, Germans, Koreans and other nationalities and undesirables) and 'counter-revolutionary activities', which essentially gave his NKVD secret police free rein to target whoever they chose. Those who were found guilty were sent to labour camp gulags, where the shocking conditions resulted in at least a million deaths.

In 1928, Stalin initiated his Five-Year Plan for a consolidated Soviet Union, starting with 'collectivisation', which roughly translates to taking peasants' land, property and supplies by force. The plan failed, but Stalin refused to admit defeat; executing approximately 20,000 people as millions died from starvation or being sent to the gulags as a result of opposing their orders. From 1932-33, Stalin deliberately starved the Ukraine in a horrific act of genocide, denying food supplies and preventing civilians from leaving the worst affected areas. More than 10 million people died in the space of just one year.

Stalin's crimes against humanity were equally as prevalent in wartime. His forces committed numerous human rights abuses, including the massacre of 25,700 Polish prisoners in 1940, ordering deserters to be shot without trial and placing German prisoners in gulags with little hope of survival. While the number of deaths resulting from his regime remains unclear, the staggering estimates range from 15-30 million.

SUHARTO

INDONESIA 1967-1998

In the 1940s, Indonesia was the site of fierce conflict between the Netherlands and Japan. The young Suharto fought for both countries before finally joining guerrilla Indonesian forces fighting against the Dutch occupiers after World War II. From Indonesia's independence in 1950 onwards, Suharto rose through the ranks, becoming a major general in 1962. This set him in direct opposition to the communist government, led by President Sukarno, and conflict was inevitable.

After escaping an assassination attempt in 1965 that took the lives of some of his army colleagues, Suharto led a coup and began a communist purge that went beyond the government to spread throughout the country. He orchestrated violence and torture while blaming his opponents. The estimated death toll for this purge is between 600,000 and a million. Many believe that the assassination attempt was staged by the US, who gave him support for his opposition to Sukarno's communist regime.

Suharto took office in 1967 and announced a 'New Order,' which would utilise Western aid and create an expanded oil industry. It revitalised the economy but his rule was militaristic, corrupt and authoritarian. Death squads put hundreds of thousands of 'criminals' to death, leaving the bodies in public view. He annexed East Timor in 1976, denied freedom of the press, accepted bribes for government contracts and siphoned off money, while any opposition to his policies were met with deadly force.



The student protest against Suharto's brutal regime would eventually see him fall from power

"Death squads put hundreds of thousands of 'criminals' to death, leaving the bodies in public view"

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early Nineties, Suharto tried to dispel his image as a military dictator, but there were increasing numbers of demonstrations that culminated in May 1998. As security forces clamped down on student demonstrations, rioting began and was directed towards Chinese Indonesians, resulting in around a thousand mortalities and 168 reported rapes. The international community was stunned and Suharto was unable to escape blame. He resigned on 21 May and successfully avoided prosecution for his crimes against human rights right up to his death on 27 January 2008.

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CHAIRMAN MAO

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA 1949-1976

Like many rulers following the Second World War, Chairman Mao took control of a country with a disparate population and used communist rhetoric and modern technology in an attempt to centralise production and keep a firm grip on his power. Before long, his methods had extended to a much more brutal use of force.

Mao became Chairman of the Communist Party of China in 1943, which came to power in 1949. Land was reappropriated to the peasants by force, murdering the former landowners until approximately a million were dead. The Campaign to Suppress Counter revolutionaries took the lives of around 800,000 people suspected of being opposed to Mao's cause. His Hundred Flowers Campaign, which was supposed to open the floor to suggestions on how to improve his rule, led to the persecution of anyone who had spoken out. Many more were sent to 'reform' through labour camps, where more than 45 million people were killed between 1958 and 1962.

Facing public humiliation, Mao organised the Cultural Revolution to upheave the bourgeois elite. The death toll reached one and a half million. On his death in 1976, Mao had unified China and brought in a more advanced technological age at the cost of untold millions of his citizens.





Protesters burn effigies of North Korea's founder Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il and his son and present leader Kim Jong-un during a rally in South Korea

KIM JONG-IL

NORTH KOREA 1998-2011

When Kim Jong-il stepped into power following the death of his father Kim Il-sung, many of the tools of oppression that he would use were already in place. He was officially inaugurated as North Korea's president in 1998, despite the fact that he had effectively taken control of his father's old party four years previously.

Fearing the influence of the West after the Cold War and with his country suffering from famine and economic downturn, Kim Jong-il adopted a 'Military First' policy. This created the fifth largest military in the world and ensured that the infrastructure of fear remained as powerful as it had been before.

This diversion of resources towards the military and their increased presence in administrative activities did nothing to prevent the estimated three million deaths from famine. Objection was hardly an option, as the prison camps where enemies of the state and their entire families were sent, continue to this day. It's estimated that there are currently 200,000 victims imprisoned in these camps, with an annual fatality rate of up to 25 per cent. Human Rights Watch officials are forbidden from entering North Korea and the Ministry of People's Security encourages citizens to inform on their neighbours, who face torture and execution for unpatriotic speech.

Kim Jong-il spread rumours of his powers that were almost god-like, as well as an image of a leader working tirelessly for the good of his people, with his citizens addressing him as 'Dear Leader'. He persistently tested weapons, bringing his country to the brink of war with their South Korean neighbours on several occasions.

In the late 1990s, it seemed as though Kim Jong-il was moving away from isolationism, but those steps were taken back following George W. Bush's Axis of Evil speech in 2002, after which North Korea actively began developing nuclear weapons. An uneasy peace continued as Kim Jong-il's health began to deteriorate and he suffered a series of strokes. He finally died on 17 December 2011, but his legacy continues with his son Kim Jong-un.

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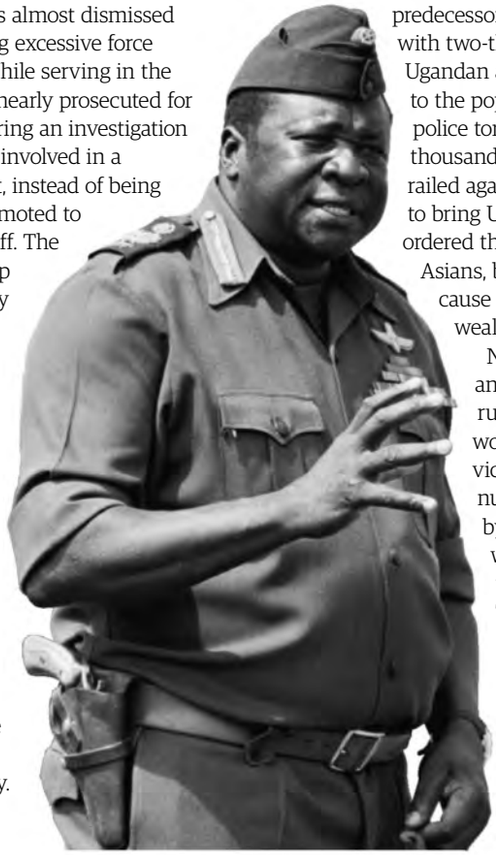
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IDI AMIN

UGANDA 1971-1979

The brutality of Idi Amin's regime was foreshadowed at several points during his rise through the Ugandan military ranks. After joining the British colonial force The King's African Rifles in 1946, Amin was almost dismissed more than once for using excessive force during interrogations. While serving in the Ugandan Army, he was nearly prosecuted for atrocities committed during an investigation into cattle theft. He was involved in a smuggling operation but, instead of being investigated, he was promoted to General and Chief of Staff. The fact that Amin led a coup shortly afterwards hardly seems surprising.

Adopting the staggeringly egotistical title of 'His Excellency President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Doctor Idi Amin, VC, DSO, MC, Lord of All the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Sea, and Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particular', Amin was thought to be a good change by the international community. But even as he publicly dissolved the Ugandan Secret Police, he began brutally hunting down his predecessor's supporters. Amin bombed Tanzania and began an ethnic purge of Acholi and Lango people when supporters of his predecessor attempted a coup, starting with two-thirds of the 9,000-strong Ugandan army and quickly expanding to the population at large. His secret police tortured and murdered tens of thousands of their citizens, as Amin railed against conspirators aiming to bring Uganda down. In 1972 he ordered the expulsion of all Ugandan Asians, believing them to be the cause of his nation's incredibly weak economy.



Notorious for his cruelty and flamboyant behaviour, rumours abounded that he would eat the bodies of his victims. Estimates put the total number of people murdered by his regime at 300,000, with many thousands more tortured and exiled. When Tanzanian forces invaded the capital Kampala in 1979 with the help of Ugandan rebels, Amin fled to Saudi Arabia. He made one attempt to return but would never set foot on his homeland again, dying from multiple organ failure in 2003.



The brutal leader of Uganda acknowledges supporters and members of his army



ANTE PAVELIC

CROATIA 1941-1945

As Hitler's forces moved east, new territories in Eastern Europe required puppet rulers to ensure that Nazi interests and policies were being adhered to. Nowhere were these policies more aggressively pursued than in Croatia under Ante Pavelić. Pavelić was a lawyer who objected so fiercely to his country's union with Yugoslavia that he created the fascist terrorist movement Ustaše.

The Ustaše were given control over the Croatian state. Pavelić was determined to purify the region and embarked upon a reign of terror. The dictator exterminated those he saw as impure, which extended to Orthodox Serbs, Poles, Roma and Jews. Serbian historians put the death toll at 750,000 Serbs killed with a further 150,000 deported, while the Ustaše followed the Nazis' example and created concentration camps for Croatian Jews. His forces slaughtered men, women and children in a fashion so cruel it shocked the SS officers stationed there.

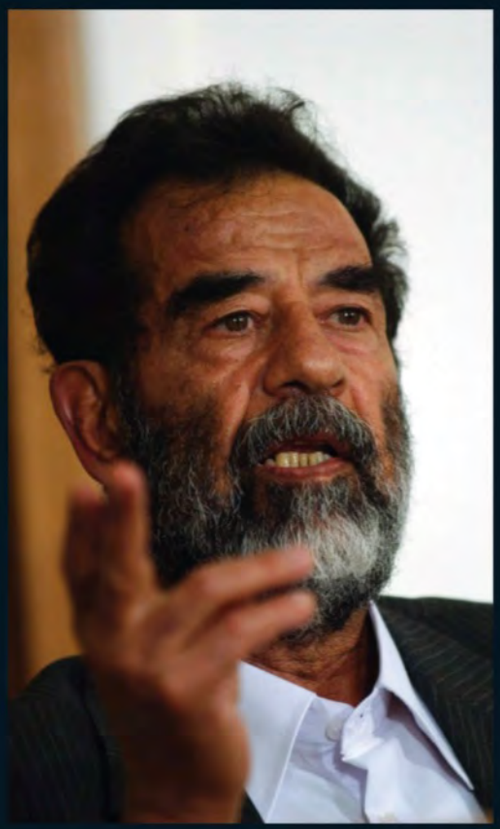
When the Nazi regime finally fell in 1945, Pavelić fled to South America with the assistance of the Vatican - the Pope had personally received him during the war. Having created his own Ustaše government in Argentina, he finally died in Madrid.



German soldiers and Ustaša collaborators lead a column of Serbs to an internment camp

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SADDAM HUSSEIN

IRAQ 1979-2003

In contrast to several of the dictators on this list, Saddam Hussein entered politics through his family connections. After an unsuccessful attempt to join the army, he followed his uncle into the Arab nationalist Ba'ath party and was made a member of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council in 1968. He made a name for himself with brutal treatment of dissidents, and when the president resigned in 1979, Hussein took power. He dealt with any opposition within his own party quickly, with dozens of executions swiftly following his appointment.

Hussein wanted the country to pull together to advance his vision of a modern Iraq, and the People's Army ensured any opposition was handled with brutal efficiency.

Most notorious was the Al-Anfal Campaign, a horrific response to Kurdish guerrilla forces that began with a poison gas attack on the city of Halabja in 1988. When the Iraqi troops moved in, the population was segregated and sent to camps, with anyone accused of being possible insurgents promptly executed. The campaign lasted from 1986-89, with up to 100,000 civilians murdered and 90 per cent of Kurdish villages destroyed.

Realising that oil was the biggest economic opportunity for his country and fearing the influence of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Saddam invaded Iran in 1980. He ignored diplomatic sanctions and deployed chemical weapons, including mustard gas and chemical nerve agents. The war resulted in a costly stalemate, lasting for eight years with up to a million casualties. Infuriated, Hussein turned his attention to Kuwait. In 1990, he declared that the nation was part of Iraqi territory and invaded.

America would then lead the conflict against a power they had helped arm, and the Gulf War lasted just six weeks after the world intervened. Defeated once again, Hussein brutally crushed the Shi'ite and Kurd uprisings that had developed as a result of his destruction. His actions and refusal to comply with United Nations weapons inspectors would lead to conflict once more, with the Second Gulf War ending his reign and life amidst a huge amount of controversy.

"Hussein ignored diplomatic sanctions and deployed chemical weapons"



The toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue was one of the Iraq War's most iconic moments

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ADOLF HITLER

GERMANY
1933-1945

No other dictator has left their mark on history as indelibly as German dictator Adolf Hitler. From his meteoric rise to power at the head of the Nazi party in the early 1930s to his final lunatic actions as his empire crumbled in 1945, Hitler is a terrifying example of what can happen when a perfect storm of charisma, cunning, hatred and power combine.

Taking advantage of a disillusioned Germany in a crushing depression following the First World War, Hitler created a cause to rally behind and gave a face to a nation's frustration and rage. He became the leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party and was imprisoned following a failed uprising in Munich in 1923, when he wrote *Mein Kampf*. As the economy struggled and stagnated, Hitler's party gained more influence and the persuasive public speaker took centre stage.

Having gained power in 1933, Hitler began his persecution of the Jews. Denied citizenship, many began fleeing the country as synagogues were burned and persecution worsened. His greatest crime against humanity began with Crystal Night on 9-10 November 1938, which saw co-ordinated attacks against Jewish citizens in cities throughout Germany and Austria. Up to 100 people were killed, and 30,000 were subsequently rounded up and sent to concentration camps. This was just the beginning, as Hitler's campaign to rid his country of the Jewish race would result in the deaths of more than six million. At Auschwitz alone, over a million were killed. Around three million Russian prisoners of war were also killed, while anyone who did not fit the requirements of the master race, such as homosexuals and disabled citizens, were executed in the hundreds of thousands.

From the Blitzkrieg to the Holocaust, it scarcely seems credible that one man could be responsible for so much horror. By the time he took his own life on 30 April 1945, Hitler was responsible for the deaths of 11 million people.



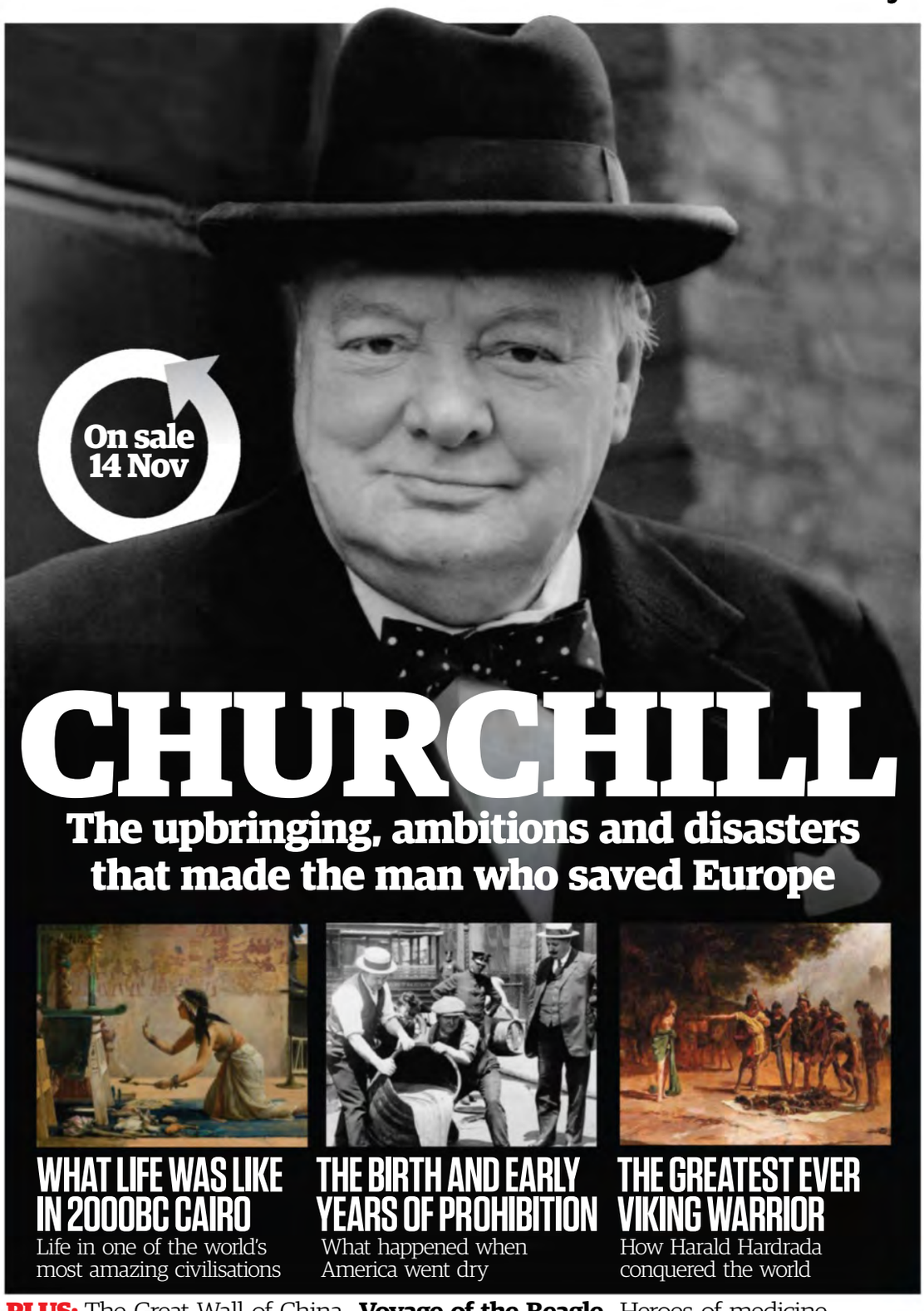
Shoes taken from victims of a Nazi concentration camp at Majdanek, Poland

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CHURCHILL

The upbringing, ambitions and disasters that made the man who saved Europe

WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE IN 2000BC CAIRO

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THE GREATEST EVER VIKING WARRIOR

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THE WHITE DEVIL: THE WEREWOLF IN EUROPEAN CULTURE

Uncover the curse of the lycanthrope in Matthew Beresford's history of the werewolf

Author: Matthew Beresford **Publisher:** Reaktio Books Ltd **Price:** £16.95



Matthew Beresford lends historical depth to the stuff of nightmares in this fascinating portrayal of werewolves in society and culture. By combining mythology, archaeology, psychology, historical sources from period manuscripts and written accounts, Beresford offers readers a complete guide to the werewolf in the historical mindset.

Opening with the 'cult' of the werewolf in ancient antiquity, the reader is taken on a dark journey through chilling medieval folklore; from the 'myth' of the predator werewolves among the aristocracy of the 16th and 17th centuries to the transition of the werewolf into a figment of insanity in the modern era. The changing cultural significance of the werewolf in society is also charted, opening with the adoption of werewolf fables in strange pagan rites through to the gradual integration of these practices into the Christian belief system that propelled the werewolf myth across the centuries.

The reader is also enticed into the depths of madness, as Beresford describes the psychology behind the transforming beast, making links between madness and the image of bloodthirsty werewolves haunting the landscape. He argues that the process of transformation from human to beast represents the nature of man; civilised one minute and savage the next. For fans of *True Blood* or *Twilight* there is plenty to like and find familiar here as Beresford gives an intriguing insight into the creation of werewolf lore, the rules of what a werewolf can and can't do in the real world and how this has changed over the last 1,000 years - perfect for any die-hard fan of the werewolf and its presence in popular culture.

The tales of suspected werewolf attacks and the superstition surrounding werewolf folklore is well presented, offering a horrifying insight into the medieval and early modern mind. The treatment of the changing socio-cultural standing of the werewolf is also skilfully researched, creating plausible linkage in the adoption of the werewolf myth from the pre-Christian societies to the domination of the church.

Beresford has sourced hundreds of primary accounts from across the historical periods he brings into focus, creating a compelling narrative which is made even more vivid by the illustrations presented within the chapters - 57 truly unsettling images of the depiction of werewolves from antiquity to the present. While the analysis on the psychology surrounding the myth of the werewolf does feel a little like an afterthought, the cases of madness involving hallucination of transforming animals are disturbing enough to keep the reader on edge.

It's a sign of the quality of the historical account that it triggers genuinely scary images in the mind's eye - at times its thrilling narrative reads more like intense horror fiction than historical text. However, what brings this book to life is the research, and it's difficult to imagine a more focused book on the social position of the lycanthrope. A must for anyone seeking an alternative history on a subject that has long captured the imagination.

Verdict ★★★★☆



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Monsters and Grotesques in Medieval Manuscripts **Alixe Bovey**
A guide to the medieval belief systems, blurring the realms of dreams and reality.

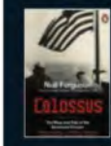
"It's difficult to imagine a more focused book on the social position of the lycanthrope"



TOP FIVE CRITICAL HISTORIES

Titles that analyse themes and effects of oppression and imperialism

COLOSSUS



Author: Niel Furgasson
A gripping narrative of the rise of an empire that denies its existence but has expanded throughout the globe. The author argues that through its ruinous economic and foreign policies, America is an empire in decline that will collapse.

FROM THE RUINS OF EMPIRE



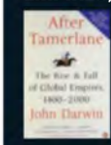
Author: Pankaj Mishra
A tale of western imperialism in the Victorian age and how it informs Asian thinking today. The text suggests imperialism has created an Asian renaissance.

ORIENTALISM



Author: Edward W Said
A controversial description of Western attitudes towards the East, showing that Orientalism was essential for colonial countries to deal with the people living outside of Europe.

AFTER TAMERLANE THE RISE & FALL OF GLOBAL EMPIRES, 1400-2000



Author: John Darwin
The effects of colonial expansion on the modern world and its politics are summarised in a one-volume text that covers six centuries of conquest.

THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH



Author: Frantz Fanon
In this shocking portrayal of colonial oppression, Franz Fanon analyses the role of class, race and violence in colonial societies of the 20th century.

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HORRIBLE HISTORIES FRIGHTFUL
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Discover the gory details of three truly horrible periods of history

Author: Terry Deary **Publisher:** Scholastic Children's Books **Price:** £6.99 each



The *Horrible Histories* series presents new editions of three truly nasty periods of history. *Vile Victorians, Vicious Vikings* and *Frightful First World War* all give fun and accessible introductions to the key themes and elements of their respective times.

Each book presents a 'day in the life' chapter, allowing readers to fully immerse themselves into the worlds of the historical characters shown. There are also some wonderful passages on the cultural and social aspects of the respective historical periods including Viking poems, Victorian food, and the Year of Mud in the First World War. An excellent example can be found in *Vicious Vikings* where author Terry Deary presents a diary written in a modern style detailing the life of Viking men and women, adding some helpful context to the historical facts. Readers are also treated to some laugh-out-loud social commentary in *Vile Victorians*, as well as something that all children of school age will likely appreciate – the truly horrendous schooling system of the Victorian era.

However the true gem out of the three is the depictions of life found in *Frightful First World War*. Deary does not shy away from the controversial episodes of terrible conditions and harsh punishments, but still manages to keep the content from getting too heavy by presenting some comic book sketches and unearthing some bizarre practices performed on the western front.

All of the books also come with an index at the back and a concise contents page, which allows younger readers to quickly access key facts and easily find sections of interest to them.



While there's little depth to be had, all three books are presented well using plenty of comic-book-style illustrations to showcase the horrible and the language is stylish enough to keep the history interesting. Highly recommended for introducing children to the fascinating world of history.

Verdict ★★★★☆



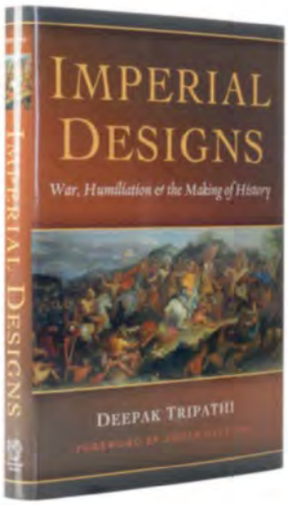
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IMPERIAL DESIGNS: WAR, HUMILIATION & THE MAKING OF HISTORY

An exploration of the effects of modern imperialism on Middle-Eastern society

Author: Deepak Tripathi **Publisher:** Potomac Books Washington DC **Price:** £16.99



Imperialism has influenced many different aspects of life and this book certainly has a strong line on the subject. It argues that imperialism destroys the cultural framework of the conquered country and instils its own cultural imperative, creating humiliation and resistance from the oppressed people. The case for 21st century western imperialism and America being at its centre is, at times, compelling but there are a number of flaws that prevent the book from making its case.

The idea of 'humiliation' is never properly defined or characterised within the framework of the argument and most of the book recounts western intervention in the Middle East and Persia and then leaves the reader to make the link between historical intervention and humiliation.

There are also no specific case studies or hard empirical evidence to be found. The book relies on the rather dated and inflexible model of metropole controlling periphery; the author presents the Middle East as an oppressed region, which for centuries has been subject to the whims of the West's power.

Through this foreign control he shows the rise of radical Islam as a counter to this external influence. He completely disregards the idea that the Muslim world can manipulate the West just as much as the West can hold sway over Muslim nations. There is also plenty of evidence to suggest that countries like America have entered a phase of self-restriction, whereby foreign intervention is viewed with hostility by its people, limiting how much the West can interfere in other sovereign countries.



While the book presents an interesting argument, it feels more like a hypothesis rather than the finished article. Although Tripathi's take on the link between the West's intervention in the Middle East and the radicalisation of humiliated people there strikes a chord, the book never entertains the idea that Islamic powers can be just as potent in the face of imperialist power.

The book provides an interesting account of the history of the West's impact on the Middle East but adds little to the postcolonial debate. Much of its theory can also be found elsewhere in other better-framed arguments.

Verdict ★★☆☆☆

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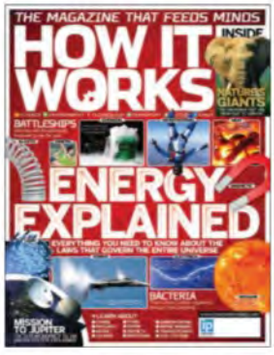
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General Orde Wingate (centre) with other officers awaiting a night supply drop at an airfield in Burma

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AMAZING STORIES

The war after the war

For some, WWII didn't end with Germany's surrender but continued in the jungles of Burma



Adrienne Hughes, Oxfordshire

For most British people WWII ended on 8 May 1945, when the armed forces of Nazi Germany surrendered to the Allies. However, far from the celebrating crowds of the West, deep in the jungles of Burma, a war was continuing for my uncle.

The British Fourteenth Army were responsible for operations against the Japanese in occupied Burma. One of its subordinate formations were the Chindits – a British India 'Special Force' that had been formed in 1942 and put into practice by Major-General Orde Wingate to penetrate the jungle on foot, relying on the element of surprise to push through enemy lines.

The Chindits were a tough bunch that had been trained to fight to the death. The Fourteenth Army had planned to use them as part of the first advancements into Burma in early 1943, but when the plan was abandoned, Wingate sent his Special Force in anyway. On 8 February, Operation Longcloth commenced, and 3,000 Chindits began their march into Burma.

My uncle Iain McIntosh, who before the war worked as a banker in India, had been recruited into the Chindits as a Sergeant. It was his job to lead his column of troops through the jungle towards the Japanese. However, things did not go smoothly. Since there were no established paths, they had to clear their own using machetes and kukris. The maze of waterways made it easy for

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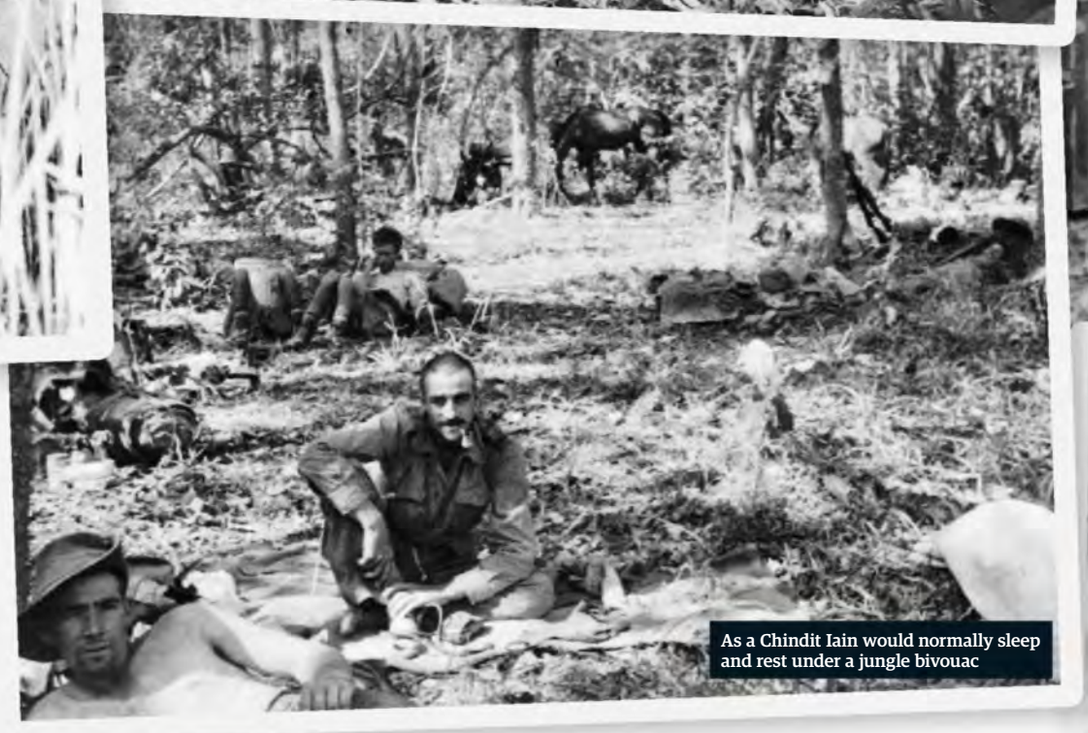




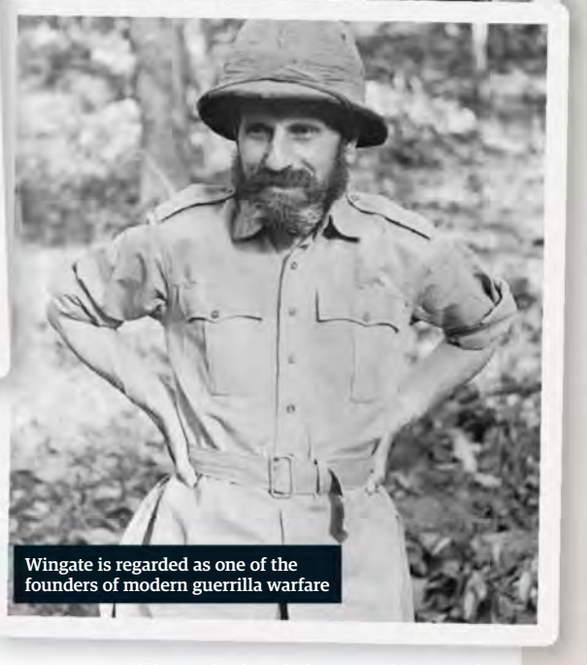
Chindits making tea at their jungle bivouac



An RAF wireless operator attached to a Chindit column



As a Chindit Iain would normally sleep and rest under a jungle bivouac



Wingate is regarded as one of the founders of modern guerrilla warfare

the Japanese to corner their enemy, and many of the columns were ambushed. Eventually, Wingate made the decision to withdraw the force.

The Japanese had patrols all along the river bank so could quickly detect when an attempt at crossing was being made. To make matters worse, my uncle did not know how to swim. However, his strong leadership over the course of the last two months had gained him respect among his men, who were determined not to leave him behind. They set about gathering bamboo from the groves around the river and bound the thick stems together, creating a makeshift raft. His men then waded into the water and began to swim across, with some pushing the raft bearing Iain and the column's supplies across the treacherous river.

It wasn't long before they were spotted by Japanese lookout patrols that opened fire. Despite a shower of shells, they continued to advance through the water, and eventually Iain and his raft convoy reached the other side unharmed. Others were not as lucky, and the column suffered heavy losses, including its only medic. As well as the fatalities, many of Iain's men were injured in the crossing. Wingate had issued specific orders to leave behind all wounded, and what with the loss of the medic, this could have easily been justified. However, in the same way that they had not abandoned him, Iain refused to abandon his men, and took it upon himself to treat them.

When he came to distribute the medical supplies, he was horrified to discover that many of the labels had washed away or were no longer legible as a result of the river crossing so it was impossible to tell which medicine to prescribe. He decided that his only option was to take a gamble. Feigning confidence, he handed out medicine and reassurance to his unknowing troops. Thankfully, much to his surprise and delight, every one of his men made it back across the border into India.

Do you know someone with insight into these lesser-known battles?

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ANTIQUES & OBJECTS

A journal of war and peace



Maxine Edwards, Gwenddwr, Powys

Exploring family history can throw up some unexpected delights, as I found when I discovered that my grandfather six generations ago was a serving soldier during the Napoleonic wars. His name was Benjamin Miller and he served in the Fourth battalion of the Royal Regiment of Artillery from 1796 - 1815. Imagine my further delight when I discovered that Benjamin had kept a journal, which was never intended for publication and therefore is a truly unfiltered account of all of his experiences.

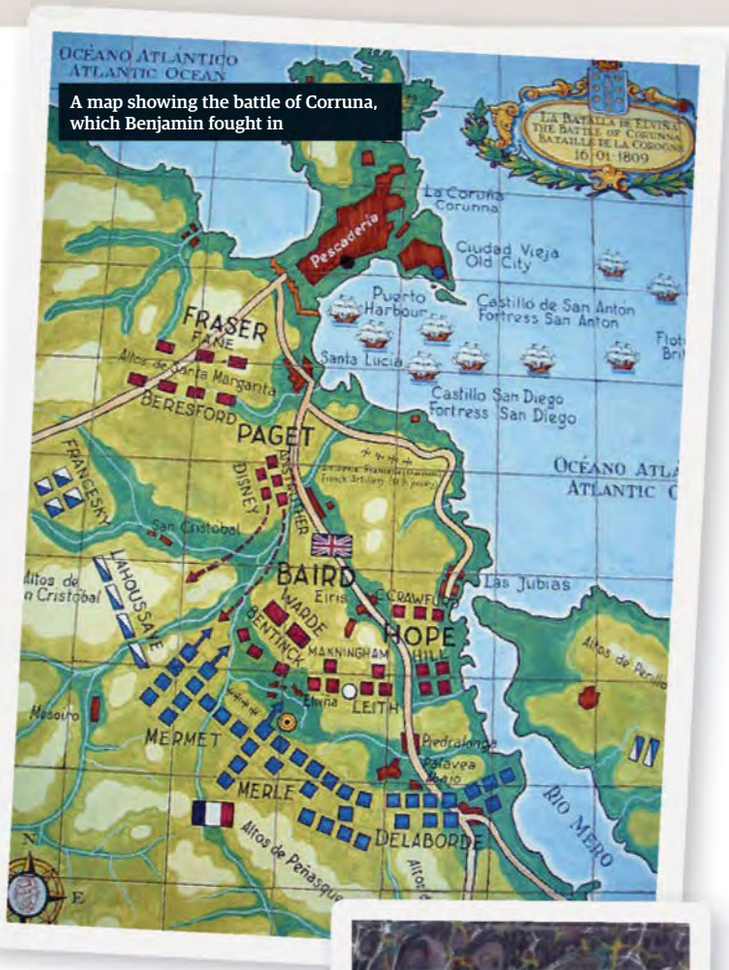
Benjamin was born in Melbury Osmond in 1776 and learnt to read and write as a pageboy, after which he became a 'failed' weaver. As Benjamin says in his journal... 'Not being healthy in that business I bound myself to Mr Penny, Glove maker'. It seems though that glove making wasn't exactly a wage puller as he writes in his journal, 'My wage being so very small I enlisted into the Royal Regiment of Artillery on 9th December 1795.'

Benjamin was to spend the next nineteen years in service. In 1800 he volunteered for Egypt and fought in the battle of Alexandria. In 1808 he and his regiment 'routed the French' at Mondego Bay before reaching the slaughter that became the battle of Corunna. Benjamin's description of this battle and others are both extremely detailed and graphic. The journal isn't all blood and bayonets though. There are some wonderful descriptions of the day to day. He argues quite stubbornly with priests in Ciudaela, he visits St. Johns Church in Valetta, 'The most beautiful place I ever saw where Bonaparte stole the Gold gates from before the altar'.

He sometimes drank too much and one night in 1798 out with a party of fellow soldiers he writes 'We were pretty full of wine. I lay down in a furrow and slept until morning ... many more were in a worse state than me.' It seems that even in 1798 hangover cures were well known as, recognising the need for a shot of vitamin C, Benjamin and his pals raid an orange grove. Tiring of picking oranges individually they uprooted a whole tree and carried it back to barracks. Benjamin retired in 1815 on a pension of one shilling and sixpence halfpenny a day and returned to Melbury where he died in 1865 aged 88.

So, there it is - a real soldier telling it as he lived it and his stories have now been published as a book. Am I proud of Benjamin? Yes, of course I am.

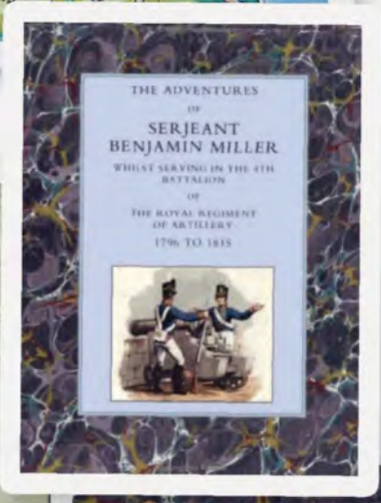
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A map showing the battle of Corruna, which Benjamin fought in



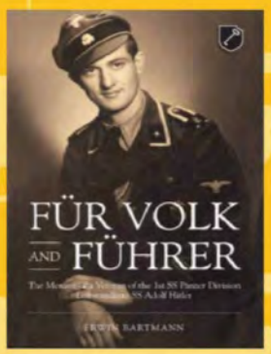
Benjamin served in the British army for 19 years



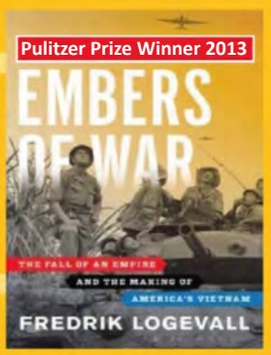
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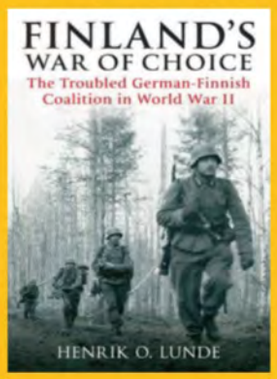
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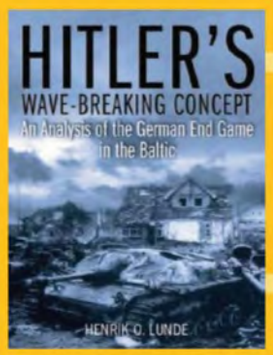
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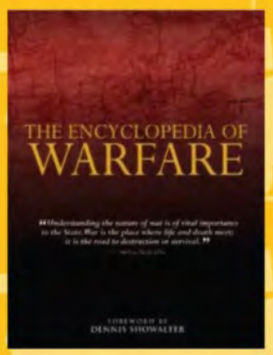
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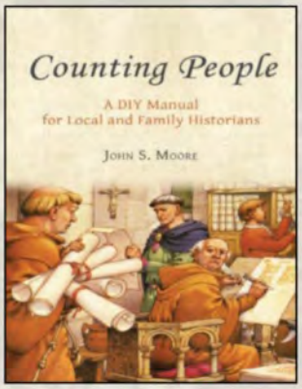
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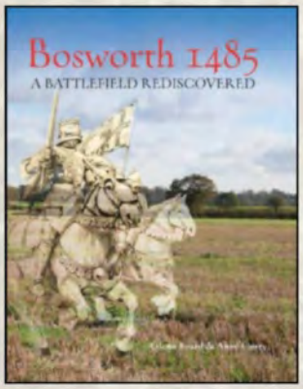
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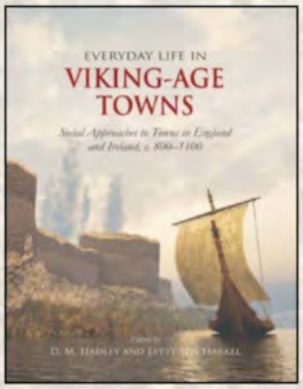
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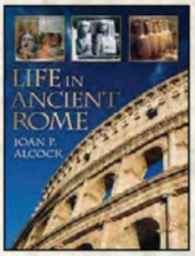
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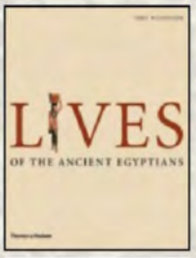
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HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

THE IRON LADY

Director: Phyllida Lloyd **Starring:** Meryl Streep, Jim Broadbent, Richard E Grant **Country of origin:** UK/France **Year made:** 2011

The lady may not be for turning, but are historical pedants turned on or off by the film depicting the life and times of Margaret Thatcher?



01 Thatcher says goodbye to Airey Neave in the car garage at Westminster just before he is assassinated by a car bomb. In fact she was not actually in Westminster at the time of the bombing but attending official engagements elsewhere.



04 Thatcher mentions the European Union in reference to the European community during the film. The EU was not formally established until 1992 under the Maastricht Treaty, two years after her tenure as Prime Minister ended.



02 The film portrays Thatcher as the lone female voice in Parliament and doesn't show other female MPs in these scenes. The reality is that during her political career there were actually between 19 and 41 female MPs elected and sitting in parliament at the same time as her.



05 During one of the debates it's implied that Michael Foot, Labour leader during the Thatcher government, was against war in the Falklands. In fact he supported it, saying: "The people of the Falklands have the absolute right to look to us at this moment of their desperate plight."



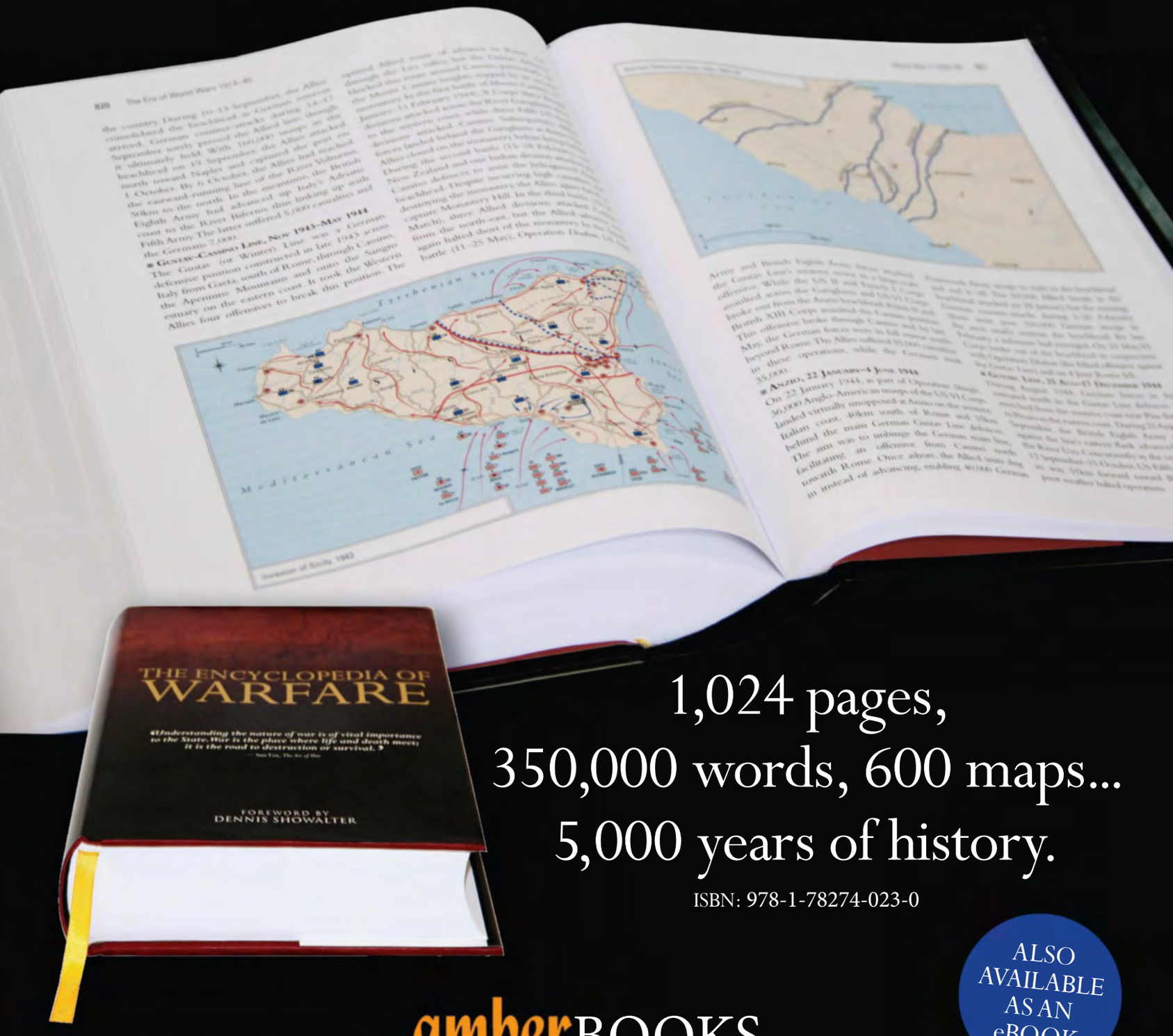
03 The film depicts Thatcher with a hat on in Parliament. Thatcher never wore a hat when she was sitting in the chamber as the practice is discouraged by parliamentary code.

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Sherman M4 MKI Tank

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Lee Grant Medium Tank

The highly successful M3 medium tank was designed in 1941, and as the casting of suitable turrets was not yet available the M3 used an unusual armament configuration based on an earlier French design. Used across the Pacific, the Lee/Grant led to the design of the Sherman tank, the Allies' most important and numerically vital tank of the war.

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